BEHIND THE GERMAN LINES

Ralph E. Ellinwood

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A NARRATIVE OF THE EVERYDAY LIFE OF AN AMERICAN PRISONER OF WAR

BY

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S. S. U. 621

U. S. A. A. S.

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Dedicated

TO

THE MEMORY OF MY HEROIC COMRADES WHO WERE
MURDERED BEHIND THE GERMAN LINES

PREFACE

"How did the Germans treat you?" That question was asked me so often on my return to America that I decided to write, for the information of my friends who have manifested such a kindly interest in our experience, a full account of what happened to my comrades and myself during my seven months behind the German lines as a prisoner of war. This is not an exciting story, for the life of a prisoner was at best a most wearisome existence. Yet the life in itself was so different from anything I had known before that there was for me always an endless interest which tended to lessen the hardships and the sense of danger.

RALPH E. ELLINWOOD.

BISBEE, ARIZONA,
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Behind the German Lines

CHAPTER I

CAPTURED

SECTION Sanitaire U. 621 had been relieved from duty along with the 74th French Division to which it was attached, early in May, when the English took over the sector northwest of Rheims. We had just gotten comfortably settled in the grounds of an old château owned by a Polish prince by the name of Poniatowski. There we enjoyed an idle life of repose, wandering around the grounds, reading in the shade of its stately elms, or watching the fish play among the lily pads in the ancient moat. Only an occasional boche avion, regularly shelled by the French anti-aircraft guns, reminded us that we lay somewhere behind the lines. Then, hurried orders came for us to move to Pernant, eight kilometers west of Soissons.

During one of the few afternoons before leaving, another driver and I strayed down to the meadow and talked over what the future possibly held in store for the Section. It was remarked that we had had too

easy an existence, for since I had joined the Section, in December, 1917, we had suffered nothing more than one shelling of our cantonment and an occasional piece of *éclat* in one or more of the ambulances. We came to the conclusion that we were headed for the Somme, and that meant, if the rumors were true, that we were to undergo a heavy punishment during the coming weeks. Yet, I believe that most of us were anxious to get into a big battle.

We had been at Pernant only a few days, quartered in a frame schoolhouse, when, on the evening of May 26th, a call came in for three ambulances for detached duty with the *Médecine Divisionaire*, chief doctor for the division. Everyone wanted to go, such a call being considered a pleasant change from the usual routine work, and at the time it meant getting on the road again and away from camp. The lot fell to Jack Savoy, of Holyoke, Massachusetts, who spoke excellent French, to P. L. Bixby, of Long Beach, California, and myself. The call in itself indicated a movement. If there were any rumors concerning a German attack, I do not recall them, but as I look back there seems to have been an atmosphere of excitement and pending action. We pulled out, Jack in the lead, following the road toward Soissons, crossing the river Aisne north towards Pommiers and then west to Osly-Courtil, where, as our *permi rouge* read, we were to be stationed. We parked our cars in the small *Place des Etats-Unis*, under the foliage of the bordering trees, which offered a splendid camouflage. There we waited until the doctor should need us.

Osly-Courtil was divisional headquarters and thus full of staff cars, coming and going, with their lights piercing the darkness; others with no lights crawling quietly into the village to avoid detection. Now and then a camion would rumble through the village. We could not sleep, although we had rolled into our blankets on stretchers in the back of our cars.

An orderly informed us, about midnight, that a car would be needed at 4.30 A.M., to go to Crouy. We tossed for it, and the lot fell to me. It was about that time, a little before or after midnight, that the front broke into a long rumble, rolling like heavy thunder—an ominous foreboding. None of the shells was hitting near, so we dozed off for a few hours. At four o'clock I drove over to the officers' quarters. The French doctor and his aide were waiting, and we put his rather bulky equipment in the rear of the car. Recrossing the Aisne we headed for Soissons. The doctor, a slight man of perhaps fifty years, with a kindly face and gentle eyes, remained silent, save for spasmodic remarks offering me advice on my driving. If a shell hit on the road ahead of us he exclaimed, *doucement!* or, if we heard an explosion behind us, his exclamation was, *allez toute suite!*

We passed through Soissons shortly after daylight. Never shall I forget the strained expressions on the faces of the civilians who, from their doorsteps, were watching the few cars that were hurrying through the almost deserted streets. Only a few days before, several of us had driven into the city for provisions. The shops were then open, the vegetables and meats

temptingly displayed, and the inhabitants apparently forgetful that they were living directly under the German guns. But this morning Soissons was awake early, watching and waiting for the developments of the battle of which the bombardment was only a forewarning. Over the *Pont Neuf*, across the Aisne, and three kilometers out to Crouy, we hurried.

The summer before I had worked in the French transport service, in this vicinity, and I enjoyed the familiar scenes, noting a few changes here and there, but the most conspicuous were the results of the previous night's shelling. Fresh shell-holes lay along the road, where the boche had attempted to destroy supply trains going up to the lines. At Crouy we swung into a courtyard. My orders were to wait. Crouy was then the object of Austrian "whizz-bangs," a high velocity shell which explodes almost as quickly as the noise of its approach is heard. Having had no breakfast, I grabbed my cup and hunted up a French kitchen, which I found across the street. There I poked my head in the door and asked for some coffee. A French officer—for I had intruded into an officers' mess—offered me coffee, bread, and *confiture*, a very acceptable meal. When I returned to the car I found the doctor was waiting, and we drove to another courtyard in the village. The doctor ordered me to remain in a wine cellar which he pointed out, while he himself hunted quarters for his first aid station. The shelling had steadily increased, so that I was perfectly satisfied to remain under cover.

Once in a while I went to the entrance, but only to duck back when a shell hit close.

About noon the doctor came down and told me my car was full of wounded. *Allez a Vassemy toute suite* was his order, as he gently helped into his coat a poilu wounded in the shoulder. The roads were becoming packed and the dust rose with the heavy traffic. Ambulances raced in and out, having the right of way; dispatch riders tore along, all covered with the white dust. I avoided Soissons, taking the road towards Vailly along the river, which I crossed just south of Bucy-le-Long, joining the Soissons-Rheims road near Venizel. The railroad station there resembled a pepper-box, and what was once a locomotive lay scattered over the torn-up tracks. There I took a road, going through a bit of woods, which had been occupied by mounted troops. Here the roads were torn by shell-fire and a horse or two lay dead amid the fragments of foliage stripped from the trees. My heart almost bled at the tragedy significantly told along the road from there on to Vassemy. A child's slipper, an old man's cane, a torn straw hat, a bit of woman's finery, and over it rolled the equipment of war—soldiers walking and riding, trucks, ammunition caissons, heavy guns, behind groaning caterpillars, and here and there a few wounded, tired and haggard, carrying some bloody trace of the night and morning's battle, as they walked back to a hospital. I gave one a lift on my already loaded car. He would not leave his pack, so I dumped it on the fender. How unlike an American

—in the worst hour of suffering the French hold fast to their small earthly possessions, which is probably due to their national characteristic of thrift.

Just before reaching Vassemy hospital, a French avion had hit a boche plane. As the latter fell, he sprinkled the road with his *mitrailleuse*, which caused the mounted troops ahead of me to spread on each side of the road as little puffs of dust arose marking where the bullets hit. I turned in time to see the boche dig his nose in the field and his machine burst into flames.

Vassemy was overcrowded, and we were turned away with orders to go on to Mont Notre Dame, three or four miles distant. As I swung back on the highway, I caught a glimpse of the stretcher cases being loaded on to a waiting hospital train.

I went on. Braisne, as I had known it less than two weeks before, was far from being the same when I bumped over its cobblestones. Now, no soldiers loitered around, the stores on the main street were closed, and great holes gaped in the deserted houses and streets. As I turned off the main street and crossed the Vesle by the small dam where we had gone swimming while at Limé, I found a huge limb of one of the trees bordering the road nearly blocking the way, and, just beyond, an English ambulance was drawn up beside the road with its engine torn away and two pools of blood in the empty seat. I shuddered and wondered when my turn was coming. Past the crossroads at Limé and on to the hospital I went, only to fall in behind a long line of

ambulances waiting their turn to be emptied at the *triage*.

It should be explained that in entering the hospital from the road, one turned to the right, ran up a sharp grade for twenty yards, and, after thirty or forty yards more of level road, turned to the left, between two barracks, with a roof connecting them, where the cars were unloaded. If this description is clear, it will be noted that the *triage* or receiving station was invisible from the road, and might easily and rather quickly be approached without seeing those who were at the entrance.

After my car was emptied, I returned to Crouy, where, after a two hours' absence, I was unable to find the corner where I had been parked that morning. Not only had the corner building been wrecked, but the whole village looked different, so heavy had the shelling been while I was away. I finally found our French lieutenant, with some drivers of the Section. As our division had not gone into action, and we were not to be assigned any regular work until they did go into the lines, we were ordered back to a grove of trees just off the road, half way between Soissons and Crouy. There we remained all the afternoon, eighteen cars of the Section well camouflaged under the trees, and the drivers resting on the grass. Trucks full of infantry going up to the front rolled by on the road, half hidden in the choking dust; ambulances hurrying to the rear dodged in and out among them; light artillery lumbered forward, and now and then a big gun passed to the rear. We inquired from men

coming from the lines how the fight was going, but reports were contradictory.

Overhead, enemy and allied avions were numerous, some directing artillery fire, others fighting their own battles to the end, but all of them apparently oblivious to the anti-aircraft guns that spotted the sky with puffs of white smoke. Those two or three hours that we lay there were a strain on us, although we tried not to show it. The conditions under which we had worked up to this time had been really commonplace compared to the offensive that was now in progress, and we realized when we should be assigned work within the next few hours to do it would take all the nerve we had and more too. The back area shelling was just as heavy as that directed on the front lines, and things were certainly popping all the afternoon.

"Colonel" Cain, of Missouri, and I were sitting in my car, eating an afternoon meal of canned salmon and bread, when a big shell hit the railroad station at St. Medard, north of Soissons. A minute later another hit some hundred yards closer than the first, another minute and a third hit with the same shortened range. "Colonel" mumbled, "Another and we shall be in direct . . . " Then came a loud whistle, and the green field a hundred feet in front of us rose in a black cloud, with a terrific explosion, and the *éclats* whizzed past our heads clipping the leaves or burying themselves in the trunks of the trees behind us. We jumped and stretched out on the grass.

About seven o'clock the French lieutenant returned

and began assigning posts. Having been the last one in the party on duty, Savoy and Bixby being still at Osly, I was last on the list, and accompanied Sergeant Kenneth A. Wood, of Buffalo, and J. D. Crary, of Brooklyn, to Missy-sur-Aisne, awaiting there in the dugout under the church any extra call that might come in.

Before leaving Limé, I had stocked my car with canned goods, tobacco, and cigarettes. That particular evening, while awaiting a call, I went out to my car and looked over the supply. Some bayonets that I had saved for souvenirs I threw away and also destroyed several letters I had written home. I was familiar with the report of how the Huns treated captured non-combatants carrying arms, and I also realized that my position was such that I could be very easily captured. But little did I realize how wise these precautions were, in view of what was to follow.

We had been at Missy less than an hour, chatting with the French *brancardiers* on duty there, and drinking *pinard*, when Frank Conly of Brooklyn dropped in on his way down from the post at Condé, and said that another car was wanted there. I went on up. The night was dark and the white road, now deserted, was plainly visible as it stretched ahead. Half way there on my right a long barrack used as a stable was blazing brightly and lit up the road for over a mile. It was here that I met Baker. "Where is the post at Condé?" I called out.

"First courtyard to the right. You can't miss the

gate with the high pillars," he answered; "the post is in a dugout."

The shelling had died down. The evening seemed unusually quiet when I drew up at the post. A *brancardier* came up from the dugout when he heard my car and accompanied me down. There the young officer on duty informed me that there were not enough wounded to fill my car, *couchez-vous pour un moment.* The dugout was a spacious affair, some twenty feet underground, large enough for half a dozen cots, and well equipped for a first aid station. Presently another case was brought down. When the necessary tagging and paper work were done, the car was loaded and I was handed the billets. One stretcher case and three sitting cases.

"Vassemy" were my orders. Back over the road toward Missy and from there to the left across the river road over the Aisne I hurried. A road could not have been more deserted at midnight even had there been no war. No lights, the trees throwing faint shadows over the road and appearing as dull shadows themselves. The road opened up smooth ahead, from an apparent nowhere; there was no movement save that of my car, and no noise save the distant thud of shells. At Sermoise I passed an American ambulance (I was then on the Soissons-Rheims road). I stopped, and found the driver was William Heckert of our Section, with a load of wounded. He had become lost in his attempt to find Vassemy. As I was going there, I told him to follow me. A few miles farther on and we swung into Vassemy, past

some trucks that were lying inside the entrance, and on up to the *triage*. Ted Lockwood's car was there and soon Ted appeared with some water for one of his patients.

It was only then that we realized that the hospital had just been evacuated, and that these trucks were carrying away the last supplies. The three of us then held council, trying to decide whether to go on to Vierzy, directly to the rear, or on to Mont Notre Dame hospital, where I had been that noon and which was much nearer. We decided on the latter, as a wounded Frenchman in one of the cars asked us to hurry. Lockwood led. Just before we reached Braisne, we turned off to the right, up the steep hill which overlooks the city, thus avoiding the city itself, which was on fire, as near as we could judge. We knew that the main street was badly pitted with holes. This route was a little out of our way, but it was a matter of safety for the wounded. Coming down the hill we passed mounted troops resting beside the road, and one of their number asked to be taken into the hospital, as he was wounded in the foot. Ted picked him up. Although this road was narrow and seldom used in ordinary times, it had suffered a heavy shelling as was shown by the holes. Limé, which was just beyond, was intact, as far as we could see in the dark. At the crossroads, where we came to the road which we would have taken had we not turned off before reaching Braisne, Lockwood stopped, explaining that he had to change a spark plug and told us to go on.

It was here at the crossroads that we passed French machine gunners, lying in the shadow of the bushes bordering the road. Their guns were not set up. I passed Ted, followed by Heckert. Two miles more and we swung off the main road, up the sharp incline to the right, again to the left, and slowed up in front of the *triage*. It was then that I noticed the German helmets and a large number of bayonets among the crowd gathered between the two barracks. My first thought was that the French had taken some prisoners. Then, like a flash, the situation dawned on me. I was the prisoner!

CHAPTER II

MONT NOTRE DAME

"PUT up your hands," came a gruff command in broken English. There was no argument. I was looking into the barrel of a *luger*.

As I got out of my car, I turned, in the hopes of warning Lockwood and Heckert, but they were directly behind me.

As quickly as we had become the center of attention of the crowd at the *triage*, as quickly were we forgotten, although we were informed that if we attempted escape we would be shot.

I tried to make apologies to the wounded, as I helped them out of my car, for my having been the means of their capture. The Frenchmen were very polite, saying that it could not be helped, but from the look in their eyes I realized that for them the situation could hardly have been worse—wounded and prisoners in German hands!

I drifted among the crowd, trying to find out what had happened and how the hospital was taken. I soon learned that the hospital had been captured only about twenty minutes before, by the first German line as it advanced, and that only the guards were

left there. There had been time for the personnel of the hospital to get away, but all had volunteered to remain with the wounded.

In the dark it was difficult to tell who was in the crowd in front of the *triage*. French doctors talked excitedly, emphasizing their words with gestures; English doctors awaited calmly for developments; French nurses, in their long dark capes, grouped silently with the doctors, and among them all were the French and English orderlies and the German guards. I accosted an Englishman, supposing that he was one of the ambulance drivers working that sector, but I soon learned that he was one of the doctors. The German guards, with their barbarian looking helmets and fixed bayonets, kept wandering among us peering insolently into our faces. The harsh German language and the broken English and French spoken with a guttural accent jarred on our ears. In the succeeding months French became more like our own native tongue, while the German language always remained foreign.

We had thought of escape, and wandered away from the crowd, only to be followed by a guard and motioned back. There was no use to go any farther, for we learned that some Italians had been shot while attempting to get away. Moreover, there was work to be done right there among our own wounded.

Earlier in the day a hospital train had been expected. Had it arrived the hospital would have been evacuated before it was captured. In preparation for this train many of the wounded had been taken

from the wards down to the station or placed in rows on their stretchers outside the wards. It was now necessary to get these poor fellows back to bed. We began taking them into the wards. I worked with Mlle. Bedts, a French nurse, who proved to be, as did the other nurses, most heroic, patient, and faithful to duty in the following two months at the hospital. We began with those who were most seriously wounded, leaving those who were sleeping until the last. By four in the morning we had gotten them all to bed. I can see even now as I write, the senior nurse tiptoeing down the aisle of the ward with her dark lantern, rearranging a blanket here and there, or whispering a word of cheer to one of the patients who had not fallen asleep. What a disappointing surprise the next morning for those wounded who had slept through the whole evening and who would wake up to find themselves behind the German lines.

Among all of the wounded there was only one American, an ambulance driver of S. S. U. 646, Harry K. James, who had been wounded by a bomb the previous day.

Following the instructions of Mlle Bedts, Lockwood, Heckert, and I found beds in a half-filled ward. It took us but a minute to get to sleep once we were in bed.

Never in my life do I wish to awaken with such a hopeless feeling as I did the next morning, when I opened my eyes at eight o'clock. Outside, anti-aircraft shrapnel was bursting overhead and I could hear the drone of the propellers. But that was

nothing. "A prisoner in German hands" ran through my head over and over again. No communication with those on our side of the line, no news from home, and a very doubtful future, if all reports were to be believed. It was not so much what it meant to me personally, but the report of my being missing would be known to those at home.

Someone was moving in the ward, then I heard whispering in Italian. I changed my gaze from the whitewashed ceiling to the length of the aisle. An Italian hobbled in, his foot limp and bleeding. Excitedly he explained that he had tried to escape and was shot. Other patients began to search among their clothes for letters and orders, which were thrown into the stove. In the next few days the process of destroying printed matter that might be useful to the enemy was a common scene.

We dressed, and shortly Mlle. Bedts came in with a cheerful smile and asked how we had slept.

Mlle. Bedts was rather large, not typically French in stature, though well proportioned and straight; and, as we learned later, stronger than most men. She chatted with us a few minutes, talking heatedly against the Germans, yet hopeful concerning the whole affair. Reminding us that it would be best to destroy all written and printed matter we had with us she offered to take care of any valuables we had lest we were searched and lose them. I gave her my watch.

We offered our services for anything that would be of help to her. She accepted and led the way, going

through the barracks as much as possible and avoiding open spaces and the German guards. In an officer's ward she gave us breakfast, coffee and bread.

Then we began work. Two officers had died during the night and their bodies had to be taken to the morgue. We put them on stretchers. Mlle. Bedts and I took the first stretcher, and Lockwood and Heckert the other. My respect and admiration for Mlle. Bedts was established that morning, when she showed so much courage and coolness in the following incident:

The morgue lay some three hundred yards from the wards proper, among a group of buildings which comprised a carpenter shop, a laundry, and a sterilizing plant. As we approached the morgue, a shell whistled in and hit a lumber pile just behind the morgue, about fifty yards from us. Mlle. Bedts kept on, with the cheerful remark: "Come on, no need of stopping for that." It seemed foolhardy to go on, but if she showed no fear, it was certainly not my place to object, and she continued coolly on. Another shell came whining in and exploded much nearer. Mlle. Bedts proceeded without a word. Still another shell! This time we were within thirty feet of the morgue. Mlle. Bedts lowered her end of the stretcher and laughingly exclaimed: "We better lie down!" We did, and just in time. The *éclat* whizzed over our heads as the explosion tore the air. "*Allons!* Let us get these in before the next shell hits," she exclaimed. We hurried on, fumbling with the latch, and finally laid the bodies inside. As we

ran from the morgue another shell came in, digging up the ground between the morgue and the carpenter shop.

We went back to the officers' ward and removed the rest of the patients over to the ward of which Mlle. Bedts had direct charge, Salle 3. Lockwood, who spoke French fluently, remained there, and became Mlle. Bedts's right-hand man.

Heckert and I, having nothing to do, wandered out, trying to get a little of the lay of the camp, and to see what had happened to the cars. We found them where we had left them on the previous night. The things we had in them we took out. Tobacco, cigarettes, a few cans of food, a blanket roll, and our packs. It was then that we noticed the cars had been tampered with, and we finished the job of ruining them for further use by the Huns. The last that I saw of them was several weeks later, when one of them passed on a Red Cross truck, bound for the rear. My sincere hope is that the cars were beyond repair, at least with the wiring pulled out, and a monkey-wrench in the gears, and the tires cut, they would cause some mechanic a lot of work.

That noon we accepted Mlle. Bedts's kind invitation for dinner with the nurses in their quarters. There were about twenty in the party, so that we three Americans were decidedly outnumbered. But that made no difference, for our hostesses were delightful and the dinner delicious, especially as it was the first hot meal we had had for two days. The atmosphere of their quarters was restful and home-

like. The only interruption to the meal was by a boche avion, who used his machine gun on the hospital rather promiscuously, and then ended the performance by dropping a small bomb just outside, between two of the wards near by. All remained at the table, except one nurse, who went to her room and returned with a helmet on. The nurses took the situation coolly, merely scolding roundly the impudence of the boche.

Later, another boche avion came over, flying low and using his machine gun on the hospital. Heckert and I at the time were under a large oak tree, in the small plaza in the center of the hospital grounds, and we moved behind this, keeping one behind the other, always opposite the boche.

What object the aviator had in using us as a target, when we were already prisoners, was more than I could judge. Perhaps it was the German idea of sport.

That afternoon we found an empty barrack vacated by the officers, and tried to catch up in our sleep. This barrack became our sleeping quarters for several nights until we decided that it might be safer to move. Allied shells had been hitting in that vicinity.

During those first few days, the Germans had placed a battery of guns just outside the hospital grounds, among a group of trees, on the western side. This battery was the cause, in my opinion, of the occasional shells that hit within the hospital grounds. The Allies, in trying to locate this battery, could not

help but drop a few shells short, and these fell dangerously near the wards.

One evening, before we had moved, several shells hit near our vacant barrack, so we hurried over to a part of the grounds which appeared to be out of range, and there spent the remainder of the night rolled up in our blankets, sheltered by the sandbags that were used as a protection for the wards. On another evening, we hurried from our beds to a dugout between two of the wards. We had just gotten under cover, when a shell hit at the opposite opening from that by which we had entered, throwing the sand and dirt the length of the dugout, but injuring only one man. Had the shell hit three feet farther, it would have probably killed all in the dugout.

The next day we began work in Salle 3, under direction of Mlle. Bedts. Ambulance driving had not included hospital work before, so that we were rather out of place for a few days. The work consisted of bathing the patients in the morning, keeping the ward clean, and serving the meals. There were two nurses in the ward, Mlle. Bedts and Mlle. Michaudet, two French orderlies, and a French sergeant in charge. The amount of work that we Americans did in the first few days was not great, but we soon fell into the routine and did what we could. We took our meals in the serving room of the ward after the patients had finished and having the same food as they.

The supply of food that was in the hospital when it was captured was exhausted after a week, with the exception of chocolate, canned milk, and tea, which

lasted for some time. After that, the meals could no longer be described as meals, for they consisted only of soup and black bread, with now and then an issue of jam or butter. When the hospital supply of coffee ran out, the Germans served their own imitation coffee made from roasted barley. The soup in comparison to what we later had was very good, being made for the most part from barley or rice or noodles, with some meat. Patients in a critical condition were served special food, this consisting of rice bread, boiled rice, hot cocoa, and dried fruit.

After the Germans had taken over the supervision of the kitchens, the meals, in place of being only three a day, were changed to five, although the amount of food remained about the same—the German meal being very simple.

The morning after we were captured, a German observation balloon was directly overhead. Observation balloons, placed four or five miles apart, are usually two or three miles behind the first line, so that we were able to know about how far we were from the front.

With each succeeding day the line of ballons advanced south, and we could see as many as eight or nine stretched along the horizon. We realized as these appeared farther and farther away, that the boche was still advancing.

Notwithstanding the evidence of the German push, there was not a prisoner with whom I talked, who doubted the eventual success of the Allies, and I am sure that I did not, for I believed that the enemy

would go just so far, spending his strength as he had done on the Somme, only to be stopped at the critical point.

Nevertheless, any rumors were more than welcome, though many of them we had to take with a grain of salt, for it is part of the German nature to exaggerate in favor of themselves, and to minimize the success of their enemies.

That first week or ten days we continued working in the ward under Mlle. Bedts. It was in this ward that Harry K. James lay. With the operation just over and the piece of bomb removed from his side, he was forbidden any except liquid food for ten days. He pleaded humorously with the nurses and doctors to be allowed something more, but when they laughingly refused him, he good-naturedly resigned himself to a state of hunger. The social circle of the four American prisoners centered at his bedside. Our spirits were never allowed to become morbid and we owe James much for his cheerfulness.

The work in the ward became interesting, even though the hours were long. There was the lieutenant who, though not seriously wounded, was gradually fading away, and who demanded much attention. We gladly did all we could for him. All of the fifty patients had their own peculiarities, although most of them suffered silently, undergoing painful dressings with hardly a murmur. At times I was called into the dressing-room to lend a hand in bandaging, but that usually fell to Lockwood.

When the prisoners, or rather the personnel of the

hospital, had been listed, and the Germans found that we three Americans were working together, in the same ward with the regular attendants, we were assigned to other wards. Lockwood became an assistant to a French doctor in another ward. Heckert and I were sent over to Salle 16 to work with two French orderlies.

We had three shifts in the day. One of us and a Frenchman worked in the morning from six o'clock until noon, and were relieved until six in the evening, when the two that had worked in the morning went on the night shift. The Frenchman with whom I worked was nearly forty-five years old, had been in the war for four years, and was a prisoner for the third time. The first time he was captured he was in the infantry and was taken when wounded, but was returned after three months; the second time he was acting as a stretcher bearer when captured and was released after two months, and now, the third time, found him accustomed to the Germans and quite positive that his stay would be as short as before.

Many of the incidents at the hospital are best left unwritten, yet each of them contains its element of pathos and humor. The patients bore their suffering quietly, accepting their condition as a matter of fact, and permitting their natural cheerfulness to carry them through the long days of recuperation. We remarked over and over again how splendid these men were. No wonder the Germans had been unable to conquer such a spirit in the French race.

The contrast in the mental attitude of the Hun and

his prisoners, was very noticeable. The Hun, although successful in this drive, was not nearly as cheerful as were the prisoners.

The guards had an expression of discontent, and even among themselves showed little satisfaction over the situation. The German doctors, who were the officers of the field ambulance which took over the hospital, went about their work silently and with that overbearing manner that is so typical of the German.

On the other hand, the prisoners for the most part, regardless of their unhappy situation, went about their work with a smile and a glad word for each other. Of course, we hated the Huns, hated their mannerisms, their language, and the very sight of them.

The nurses were truly angels of mercy, as much in the mental influence they exercised over the wounded, in not allowing them to become downhearted, as in their work. Mlle. Bedts, no matter how long the day nor how hard the work, attended the wounded with the greatest kindliness and without ever allowing herself to show weariness for an instant. It seemed that her strength and spirits were unfailing. In place of using a stretcher to take the patients to the dressing-room, she would pick them up in her arms and walk the length of the ward, if need be, and place them gently on the table. Not only did she work continuously through the day, but if there were an air raid on the neighboring ammunition dumps, railroad station, or aviation hangars, she would go to her ward and remain with the wounded.

MONT NOTRE DAME HOSPITAL

Those air raids were a terrible strain on the wounded. The bombs hitting so near, although not in the hospital grounds, shook the buildings with their concussion, and it seemed that the avions were directly overhead, so loud was the drone of the machines. The Germans placed their anti-aircraft machine guns within the hospital grounds, and these were as nerve racking, with their ominous "rat-tat-tat-tat," as were the bombs. Of course, placing the guns there was a violation of the rules of warfare, but that made no difference to the boche.

The ammunition dumps were within five hundred yards of the hospital, and the hangars on the ridge of hills to the west, while the railroad ran past the hospital, with a special siding for it. But the Germans used this siding for ammunition trains as much as for hospital trains.

The Germans, moreover, marched troops through the main street of the hospital, using it as a short cut for their transports to the southern road.

Mont Notre Dame hospital, near the town of that name, lay on a rise of ground between the Vesle River and the plateau that rose on the south. It was one of the largest and best hospitals on that front, being composed of over a hundred wards, with quarters for the personnel, buildings for the supplies, a large central kitchen, several operating theaters, and five immense hangars which were used in case of an overflow. The French occupied a greater part of the hospital, although the English had taken over a part

of it when they had taken up a portion of the line in the neighboring sector.

When the Germans captured it the night of the 27th of May, they let the work continue as if nothing had happened. For the first few days there were practically no Germans there, except a few guards. Then a field ambulance took charge, but even then the French and English continued to care for their own wounded. As the line moved farther to the south, the hospital changed only in name, and became known as a *Kriegs-Lazarett*, or a war hospital, which is the same as a base hospital. Only German doctors were allowed to operate on the German wounded, although the French were used as orderlies in conjunction with the Germans. The French and English had offered their services, which the Huns refused. Later, however, when the wounded were pouring into the hospital in great numbers, after the Château-Thierry fight, the allied doctors were asked to render assistance, but they refused, in turn stating that they were no more to be trusted than previously.

Some two or three weeks after the hospital had been taken, German nurses arrived from the rear to do their share. A more incompetent body of women I have never seen in my life. They were older than the French nurses, plain, and severe looking, and, as I learned later, quite as disagreeable as the German men.

The German soldiers looted the supply rooms of the hospital during the first few days after our capture, helping themselves to shoes, clothing, and any

other articles that suited their taste. Nor were the officers above such actions, for they could not resist the temptation of taking food from the storerooms.

The result of stealing clothing had a startling effect, for the Germans were not averse to wearing whatever they could lay their hands on, so long as it served the purpose and was of good material. An Allied soldier would not think of wearing any part of a German uniform, but not so with the Hun. If he were able to obtain a pair of breeches, leggings, or other apparel, he wore them. The result was that he might be the proud possessor of English puttees, French breeches, and American shoes. In such a case it became difficult at times to tell whether the soldier was friend or enemy, especially if he were not wearing the little round fatigue cap that is so distinctively German. My own leather puttees were the source of envy to several Huns. I finally sold them, figuring that the German marks might come in useful, and that it was better to get a price for them than to be ordered to take them off.

When the French ward in which I had been working was evacuated, and the wounded either shipped to the rear on the hospital trains, or moved to other wards, I was transferred to another ward, in which were German wounded, cared for by German doctors, nurses, and orderlies. It was not the most pleasant task in the world.

One of the German nurses, who spoke English well, had lived in Cleveland for four years, so she stated. Her manner was not objectionable, but she was Ger-

man, and that was enough to put me on guard, and to keep me from being drawn into a conversation that might prove uncomfortable. One morning, however, we did get into a rather heated argument, as to "who started the war." Like the true German subject that she was, she denied that the Kaiser had begun it. Then she began laying the blame first on France and England, then on Russia, and finally, when I had refuted her, she accused Belgium of beginning the war. I am sure that by this time she is forced to realize the truth. She vowed that she would never return to America, inasmuch as they were "fighting the Fatherland." In her mind, the submarine warfare was justifiable, and the *Lusitania* affair laudable.

Heckert and I worked in this ward until he was laid off because of an infected foot. When I say that "we worked," I must admit that we did not work any more than was necessary while in the German wards.

There is a general impression in America, that the Germans are noted for cleanliness. From what I saw at the hospital, both among the patients and the nurses in the German wards, I learned that the contrary was the truth. Over and over again I have seen the German nurses take the bed bottle, step to the window, and empty it. As a result, the flies around the ward became so numerous that the wounded had to have nettings over them, especially those who were too weak to shoo them away. At mealtime, if a piece of bread and jam were laid down, in an instant it was black with flies. Although the nurse insisted that the cups be washed every morning,

the water used was only lukewarm, and none of the cups was washed well enough to be really clean.

While Heckert and I had been working in the wards, Ted had remained with the French doctor, having a rather easy time. For some reason the Germans sent him to the officers' ward next to ours. The German officers there had practically the same food as all the other patients, with the exception that it was served on china, with as much ceremony as circumstances would allow. Ted acted as steward, waiter, and general maid. It amused Heckert and me to see him continually buried behind a pile of dishes, singing to himself or improving his German as he splashed around in the dishwater. As the meals were served in courses, and they had five so-called meals a day, Ted was rather busy.

One afternoon a little French girl was brought into the French ward, with an ugly wound in her hip which she had received from shell fire in her own home in a neighboring village. A few days later a German sergeant who was making up the list from that ward for the next hospital train, came to her bedside and demanded rudely: "*Was ist das?*" as he pointed to the child.

Her condition and the circumstances of the accident were explained to him.

"Well, we will mark her down on the list as a French soldier; we can't go to the trouble of changing the list in any form for a civilian," he grunted, as he passed on.

In the German ward there was an arrogant young

boche soldier who spoke a little French and English. He had been slightly wounded in the foot, so that he was able to move around and interfere with everything that went on in the ward. One afternoon he told me that I did not speak as good English as he did. While I realized my own English was far from perfect, his ignorant presumption was refreshing. Conversations with him were always amusing, for he was so typically German that it hurt him to have an enemy even insinuate that perhaps the Germans were in the wrong. He insisted that the boche would be in Paris within two weeks—this was about the middle of June—and after that they would take Calais and then go over to London. Naturally, I laughed at him and replied that the Allies were stronger than the Germans believed; that there were over a million Americans in the lines already, and that these were all shock troops. It was his turn to laugh, so he thought, as he said that "one good German was worth five Americans." When I replied that perhaps that was so, but at present there were no good Germans left as they had all been killed in the first part of the war, he grunted in disgust and that ended the conversation.

He insisted that the Germans were sinking all of the Allied ships, and would not believe for an instant that the *Vaterland* was landing ten thousand Americans in Europe every trip that it made.

From what we could learn from those who before had been prisoners, we judged that within two or three weeks we should be sent to a prison camp or

somewhere in the interior of Germany. But as the days wore into weeks, we gave up hope of being immediately moved from the hospital. Former prisoners, such as the Frenchman with whom I worked, asserted that non-combatants were being exchanged within two months from the date of capture, as agreed upon at an international convention held at Geneva.

The work was telling on all of the prisoners, especially on the doctors and nurses whose work demanded such skill and patience, during long, strenuous hours. The great question was, "When do we go to the rear?" and we trusted from day to day that the next week would see us on our way. Every week brought its rumors, most of them ill founded, but they were sufficient to keep us in continual hope. One thing most certainly would cause the hospital to be evacuated and that was the return of the line.

Day by day we watched the observation balloons that were hanging along the horizon, speculating on whether they were any nearer. We questioned new prisoners that came in, from whom we learned that the Marne had been reached, crossed, and recrossed; that the Americans were in the front line, and that the fighting would be the fiercest of the war, for this was the supreme German effort.

A few American prisoners straggled into the hospital, in groups of four or five, worn out and wounded. The first to arrive was a lieutenant of the United States Air Service who gave us definite news of the American engagements. It was then that we heard

for the first time the name Bois de Belleau and the splendid work of the Marines.

The lieutenant, flying in a squadron with eight other planes, so he told us, had been cut off from his squadron and forced to the ground. To save the possibility of his machine falling into German hands, he had turned into a nose dive for the last two or three hundred feet, wrecked his aeroplane, and he himself had miraculously escaped with only a wrenched leg. We paid him several visits, but as he refused to talk when cross-examined by a German officer, our visits were soon forbidden. The joke of it was that the lieutenant had been a lawyer in civil life, as was his enemy examiner, and when it came to a test the Hun learned nothing, but himself disclosed that the enemy machines that had forced the American lieutenant to the ground were from the famous Von Rickenhoff circus. The Hun also promised to drop a note behind Allied lines reporting that the lieutenant was a prisoner, and wounded. Upon making a complaint to the French doctors, and they in turn to the German officers at the hospital, we were able to have the lieutenant removed from the German privates' ward into an officers' ward —the same one in which Lockwood had been working.

The other Americans, being in all fewer than thirty who came in from time to time, were mostly doughboys, and formed but a very small proportion to the German wounded that were arriving under German care. These Americans were put in a separate ward, and not given as many dressings as the Germans received.

What did the small number of Americans indicate? Were only a few Americans in the line? Did the Americans prefer death while fighting to the chance of death after capture? Was the line advancing so that all wounded fell into Allied hands? We could only surmise and hope for the best.

Up to this time no great numbers of Americans had been in the lines, and nothing very extensive had been published as to their activities, so that these prisoners were of as great interest to the French and English as they were to Lockwood, Heckert, and myself. Perhaps their most noticeable characteristic was their youth. Four years had so depleted the ranks of our Allies, that the American soldiers seemed as mere boys compared with the Poilu and the Tommy.

During the first few days of our capture, we had laid aside all of the supplies that we could get hold of, especially food and tobacco. The tobacco question became serious as the weeks ran on and we had to limit ourselves to only a few smokes a day. When the German organization became perfected at the hospital, cigarettes and cigars were issued to the German wounded, and working in a German ward, we had our share of these. But the quality was so poor, probably being made of leaves and paper, that they hardly began to satisfy our American taste for the weed. Some of the men even resorted to dried cherry leaves.

The stock of goods at the French canteen, which the nurses had removed before the Germans had a

chance to loot it, furnished a supply of French tobacco and other articles which were distributed among the Allied wounded.

On the 27th of June, the Kaiser, while making a tour of inspection of the front, paid a visit to the hospital. He had been expected for over a week, and when he arrived, with his staff, in seven large open Benz cars, with the royal coat-of-arms on the doors, and with his armed chauffeur in livery, the officers of the hospital met him in the main square of the hospital, attired in their best uniforms, wearing their swords and polished helmets. I did not see the ceremony when they received him, but I noticed later, when I managed to get within twenty feet of him, that the officers, except those of very high rank, stood at rigid attention and bowed stiffly whenever they were addressed.

From the pictures that I had seen of the Kaiser, I had expected a more imposing figure. He was of only average stature, distinguished looking, tanned from exposure in the field, and with a rather tired expression which seemed to be emphasized by the fact that his mustache was drooping instead of upturned. His hair was on the verge of whiteness, and his withered arm, which rested on his sword, was very noticeable.

So this was the most hated man in the world; this man of average size, who, had he been wearing a civilian suit and walking down Broadway, might have passed for an American of the middle class. I wondered at the time whether he believed in his

THE KAISER DURING HIS VISIT TO THE HOSPITAL

heart that the German cause was as secure as he had believed it to be in 1914, and whether he thought that when the present war was over he would rule in glory the Pan-German Empire.

As he mingled freely among the Allied wounded and prisoners, I was a bit nervous for fear some hare-brained patriot might attempt to take his life, for which there was ample opportunity. This nervousness was not in the least for his safety but for that of the prisoners, the wounded, and the personnel at the hospital.

Nothing happened, however. His inspection proceeded without interruption. In the English ward he talked excellent English, asking the patients in what regiment they had served, and then saying that he was familiar with their success when they had broken the German lines at such and such a place. He remarked on the cleanliness of the English wards as compared with the German, and in truth, this was very noticeable, for the English orderlies kept their wards immaculate.

The German hospital trains were not well equipped, although they served the purpose. The cars were of the type that became obsolete in America fifteen years ago. The seats were torn out and a double row of bunks built along the sides. A train was made up of from fifteen to twenty cars, consisting of coaches for the nurses, doctors, and patients, a kitchen, and an operating car. These trains began to arrive after Soissons had fallen into enemy hands and the railroads were opened to traffic. Towards the last, when

the wounded became so numerous, freight trains were used.

On the first of July, Harry K. James, together with most of the Frenchmen in Mlle. Bedts's ward, were sent to the rear on one of these trains, bound for Nuremberg. I since have learned that no room could be found in that city, and they were moved in turn to Dresden, Berlin, Stettin, and finally Stargard, on the Baltic.

In regard to the treatment they received, he has written me:

"We were not all mistreated, but rather untreated, so far as the Germans were concerned. Luckily for us there were three British doctors who had preceded us as prisoners, and they did all that could be done considering that they had practically nothing with which to work. I was rather fortunately placed, being the only Yank for over a month living with the French. My party left Germany by way of Sweden, Denmark, and Scotland into the south of England."

The second week in July the Germans held a roll call for all of the prisoners and reassigned some of us to new jobs. Quite naturally we thought this was in preparation for our departure to the rear, but it was not. The affair took most of the afternoon. Toward the end there were three Englishmen who were still without work. A German non-commissioned officer approached them and demanded: "What rank are you?"

"Sergeants," they answered.

"How long have you been in the army?"

"One of us, ten years, the other twelve, and I have been in the army for fifteen," came the answer.

The German reported this to the head officer who looked them over searchingly and said with a little smile: "That is long enough to exempt you from further work." Occasionally the Germans revealed a sense of humor, but most always it was hidden behind their taciturnity.

The roll call did not change our work then, but the following week we were put on the grave-digging squad, which included French and Germans.

The English who were not working in the wards were assigned various duties, the most tiresome and exacting being that of stretcher bearer. Towards the end they were working thirty-six out of forty-eight hours carrying wounded from the receiving station to the operating rooms, and from there to the wards. There is no question but that the death of Corporal J. Herbert Garside, R.A.M.C., then acting as a stretcher bearer, was due to long hours, insufficient sleep, and lack of nourishment.

The graveyard lay a quarter of a mile to the east of the hospital, at the edge of a large wheat field. There the wounded French who had died at the hospital were buried. The cemetery contained long rows of well-kept graves, each marked with a simple wooden cross on which was given the deceased's name, nationality, and military organization, and, if he were Allied, the simple inscription, *Pour la France.* If the cross marked the grave of a German, it bore

only his name and division or regiment and the word, *Allemand.*

When we began our work, we dug individual graves, and the bodies were put into wooden coffins. But this method of burial was too slow, as the deaths in the hospital were occurring faster than the grave detail could dig. In place of five or six graves a day, we had to bury fifty or sixty. This was done by digging a grave thirteen feet by twenty-five, and laying the bodies in two rows, head to head. At first the bodies arrived from the morgue wrapped in blankets. Soon the supply of blankets ran out and the bodies came down wrapped in sheets, and as the supply of sheets was exhausted, paper was used for shrouds. On rainy days the paper became soaked and proved to be a very insufficient covering. The bodies were laid in the graves on their sides so that they would take up less room. Their identification tags were attached to long wires tied around their necks. As the grave was filled, these were gathered together and pulled directly over the bodies on the surface, so that later the crosses could be erected there.

Gruesome work? Yes! But the work had to be done, and in one respect it was preferable to ward duty, for it was out in the open.

At various times the Germans had boasted of what their armies were about to do, but no report came back that they had been successful, or that they even had made the attack. So when one of the German nurses informed me that they were going to make an

attack on the night of the 14th of July, an attack which would end only with the taking of Paris and which would be a crushing defeat for the Allies, I gave her story little consideration.

The hospital was so located in the center of the salient that any activity on the front was very noticeable. The distant rumble would come first from one portion of the line and then from another. On the night in question the line to the south of us broke into an ominous roll of thunder. The Germans had begun their second drive for Paris. The cannonading continued through the following days, varying little in intensity. Allied activity increased, the Allied planes flying over the lines in squadrons of twenty and thirty or more, regardless of the enemy. Several times a day we would stop our work to watch a battle in the clouds. Maneuvering for position; darting out of sight above a cloud; swooping headlong at the enemy; flashing like gilded birds in the rays of the sun, Allied and Hun planes fought their battles until one or the other fell disabled or in a mass of flames. German reinforcements marched in long columns towards the front, or rested at the edge of the woods waiting for the movement forward—troops that were no longer the pick of the German nation, but worn and tired through the four years of the war; fed on steadily decreasing rations and buoyed up on promises of early successes which never came. The gray uniforms were often ill-fitting and worn, and the wearers either mere boys or men far past the military age.

Night air raids increased. Allied planes came persistently again and again dropping their bombs. The concussion shook the buildings. Searchlights played across the sky, amid the flashes of bursting shrapnel from anti-aircraft guns.

After four days of the German attack, a new note sounded on the front. The shelling still continued, but with a deeper and more intense volume. To the southwest the line rolled and thundered with an added severity. Individual shells of high caliber, could be heard now and then above the din. At night flashes appeared on the horizon and the noise continued. We knew that the Allies were making a counter-offensive. Only upon our return to France did we realize how successful had been the American attack just south of Soissons.

From that day on, the line of observation balloons began to come back. We knew then that the Allies had turned the tide and that the boches were being pushed out of the salient.

We prayed for a pincer movement directed at the flanks at Soissons and Rheims, which if successfully executed would mean that the whole salient would have to surrender, and we would be prisoners no longer. We realized, too, the strategy that the Allies were using for the attack coming from the southwest, designated a flanking movement. This was also apparent from the fact that the boches were hurrying troops from the south for reinforcements on the west. Often we would rest on our shovels and watch the German troops, dust covered and tired, hurrying

along the road to the west. And more often we would watch transport wagons going in the opposite direction loaded with plunder consisting of everything from clothing and personal articles, to furniture and farming implements. Pianos, baby carriages, plows, mirrors, and cooking utensils, going to the rear for some frau in Germany, passed loaded high on trucks and wagons. These transports carried food and ammunition to the front, and plunder to the rear.

Shortly after the Germans had captured the hospital, they began surveying for a telephone line and erected poles across the fields. After a long delay the cross arms and insulators were added. Finally the wires were strung one evening, during the week before this last attempt for Paris. A few mornings later, the wires were taken down. Then I was quite positive that the Germans expected to evacuate the salient.

The German wounded had been coming into the hospital as the line advanced south. On the 14th of July, the number increased greatly, but the maximum was not reached until after the 18th. The gas cases, literally by hundreds, walked into the hospital, faces and hands swollen, their eyes often closed as they were led by their more fortunate comrades. Of course it was horrible, but I felt no pity for them, for the boche had been the first to start using gas, and there is no effective retaliation for the Hun, except the use of his own methods. We heard tales that the Americans were using a vomiting gas, which was so effective that the boches were forced to take

off their masks. When this had done its work, the vomiting shells were followed by a poisonous gas when the enemy was thus exposed. This I have never been able to verify. A large per cent. of the wounded were head cases. The last few days these were merely dressed at the hospital and loaded on waiting trains for the rear.

On the afternoon of July 22d, three bombs were dropped on the hospital, killing thirty and wounding a hundred. A squadron of about twelve planes had been flying at an altitude of some ten thousand feet over the hospital. A rush of air was the only warning as the bombs fell, hitting one German ward and wrecking two operating theaters. At the time of the accident I was down at the graveyard, a quarter of a mile distant, and had observed the planes flying in formation, and noticed other planes flying singly. It looked to me as though the squadron, whether English, French, or American, was on a bombing expedition into the interior of Germany; had been attacked by one or two single boche fighting planes, and to lighten his machine, the better to maneuver and to fight, one of the squadron had released his bombs. By chance the hospital was beneath. When I returned to the hospital grounds and saw the terrible wreckage, I realized why the Germans were so very indignant. This accident, I believed, would serve as a good lesson to the Huns who had intentionally bombed so often the Allied hospitals. The Germans were furious, insisting that the planes were American. The air was tense with hatred, for two Ger-

man nurses, an officer, and many German wounded were among those killed, while few Frenchmen and but one Englishman were among the unfortunate.

The week after our capture, postal cards were given to the prisoners by the Germans, who informed us that we might write home, briefly stating our situation. I doubted whether the Huns would ever send them, but nevertheless wrote simply: "I am a prisoner of war and in good health," and addressed the same to Major W. H. Brophy, a friend of the family, who was then in Paris with the American Red Cross, knowing that he would cable immediately. I repeated the first three postals to him at intervals of two weeks, hoping that one at least would reach its destination.

On many of the evenings we were in the habit of walking around the outskirts of the hospital, for the exercise. It was during one of these walks that I saw a German motor truck carrying a load of French boys, under armed guard. All of the boys were under military age. As the truck rolled down the road I realized that they were destined for the interior of Germany to work in the fields or in the factories.

We called him "Red Beard" and the name fitted the man, but that did not mean that we disliked him, although we looked upon him with friendly distrust. He was a German non-commissioned officer, who said he had lived in Kansas City for a number of years. He regretted that he was in the war, which came about through the fact that he had returned to Ger-

many to visit his mother. When hostilities were declared, he had been unable to evade military service. At first our conversations were only general, for he assumed the usual German attitude towards us, but later as we came to know one another, his bearing changed. Subsequently, when our discussions turned to the war, he would frequently remark: "Yes, you have as much right to your opinion as I have to mine, and I think that we can express ourselves without getting angry."

"When will the war end?" I once asked.

"The war would have ended, in my opinion, during the battle of the Somme, in 1916, had the Allies kept on pushing at the time. Germany would have been unable to withstand a concentrated and continued attack, as she was short of men and ammunition, but, fortunately for us, the battle did not continue." He had evaded my question, but later, when I knew him better, he confessed it as his own belief that Germany would lose.

"Of course, I have my own opinion as to who will win," he said. "I have been in America, and know with what energy she will accomplish that which she undertakes. I do not believe everything I am told, like our common soldiers—have I answered your question?" He had, and I understood that he, too, saw the end.

The long-looked-for orders finally came. We were to evacuate the hospital the next morning, July 27th, at five o'clock. The news was almost as welcome as if we had orders to go home. Everyone—doctors,

nurses, and orderlies—was worn out from the two months of nerve-racking work, under the consciousness of being prisoners, and the physical strain of being constantly in attendance upon the wounded.

That evening we made our simple preparations for departure.

The French barracks in which we had slept were a *mêlée* that evening, packing, sorting, and discussing what should be taken. When we did pull out the next morning, more was left than we took with us.

We understood that we were to march to a rail head. That necessitated making our packs as light as possible, yet, at the same time we wanted to be as well prepared for an emergency as our meager supplies would permit, for the future might mean perhaps months with no relief from outside. Moreover, we felt that the food situation was bad. As for myself, I carried two extra shirts, a change of underwear, three pairs of worn socks, the old English overcoat I had picked up at the hospital, a blanket that I had saved from my roll, several cans of food, an English water bottle, and a few personal articles. Lockwood and Heckert were carrying about the same amount, and Ted, in addition, had two loaves of bread which we had managed to save from our rations during the last week. The Frenchmen and Englishmen had about the same, but in some instances they carried a great deal more, which exposed us to the risk of losing all if some envious German took the notion of relieving us of our packs.

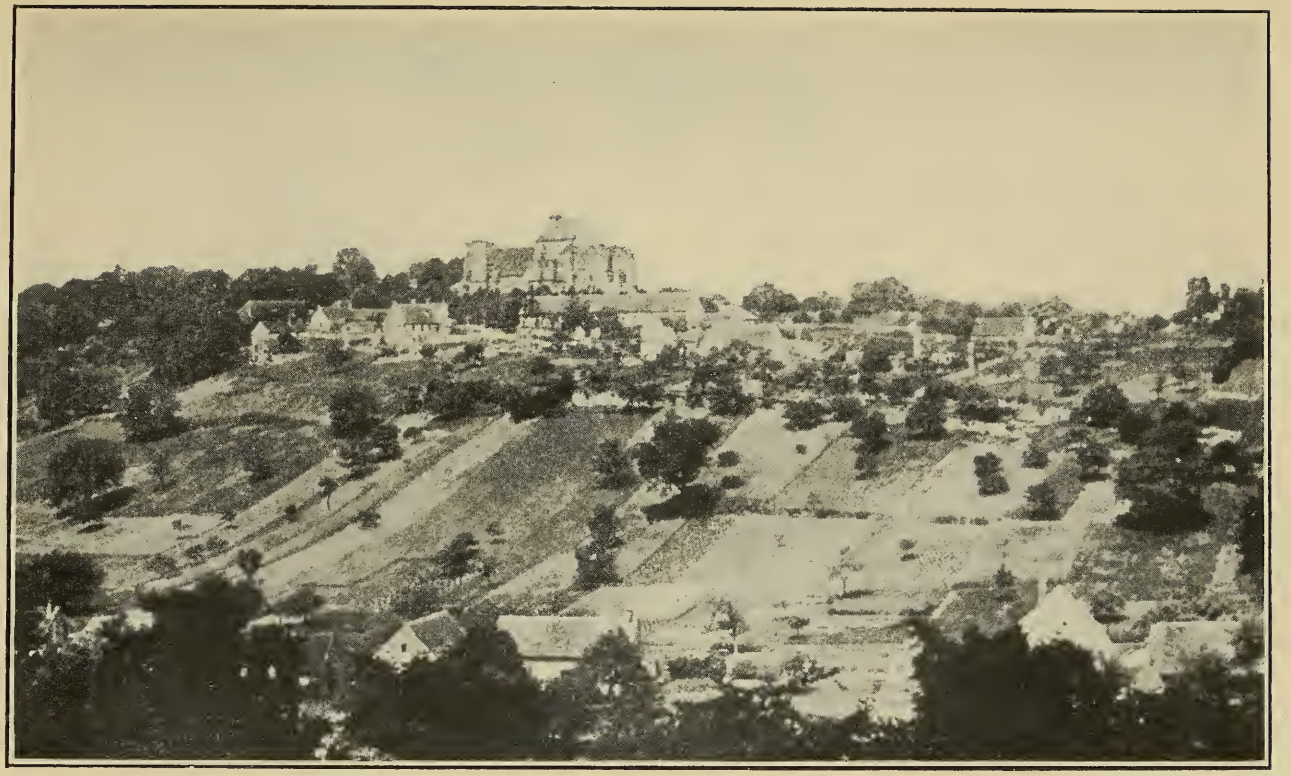
Where were we going? How long would we be

there? And what would be our situation once there? Would another month, as we had hoped, see us on our way back to France?

We were non-combatants, and under the rules of warfare we should be returned within three months after being captured. On the other hand we realized how the Huns ignored all rules. Had we not been kept at the front, not for two weeks, as the agreement at Geneva stated, but for two months? We had seen how the Germans used the roads through the hospital for troop movements and the transportation of ammunition; how they had set up anti-aircraft machine guns between hospital barracks and on the church of Mont Notre Dame; how a battery of guns was placed just outside the grounds of the hospital, and how the Germans at every possible point violated the rules of war under the flimsy excuse of "necessity."

That night I slept but little. Three times I went outside in order to hear more clearly the intense roll of the thunder of the big guns that encircled the hospital. Individual explosions had become more distinct and gun flashes were visible on the horizon. The Allies were coming back, that was the paramount event. Now, at last, our hopes were being realized. Heretofore, rumors had been our only source of news, but now the Allied guns spoke more truthfully than rumors. We were living as much in the hopes of victory as we were in the hopes of our own safe repatriation.

We had one of our greatest chances of escape that



VILLAGE AND CHURCH OF MONT NOTRE DAME

night. We three Americans talked the situation over, and decided against an attempt. The proposed plan was to take what food we had and hide in the dugout under the church on the hill above Mont Notre Dame. Once hidden there, the line would probably pass over us and we would be left in the rear of the Allied lines. But, therein lay the danger. How soon would it pass over? Our food would only last for a few days and meantime the retreating Germans would use all dugouts and the advancing Allies would clean them out with hand grenades. Being non-combatants, we could not be sure of our position, or our chances. We gave up the attempt, although several Frenchmen disappeared during the night. We knew well where they had gone and we wished them good luck and godspeed!

CHAPTER III

LAON

THE next morning, July 27th, while it was still dark, we dressed and strapped on our packs.

At five we were all collected in front of the barracks where we fell in with our allotted groups. We three Americans were in the care of a young French sergeant.

Just at daylight we moved down to the center of the hospital grounds. There the prisoners were gathered waiting for the convoy to form. It was a dull wet morning, with now and then a sharp shower of rain. The French in their blue uniforms, with their packs, and bundles, and boxes around them, looked more like troops waiting to go on leave, than prisoners waiting to go into the land of their captivity. As in all movements of troops there was a delay. Rations were being handed out, black German bread and an apology for jam. Some of us walked over to the *tisannerie* for a cup of barley coffee, only to find the building deserted, although the fires were still smoldering and the pots of coffee were still warm. At last we were counted. That was the first of many times on the coming trip that we were checked up.

Just before six o'clock several German transport wagons without tops passed, carrying the French nurses. Never shall I forget that scene; those women who had so faithfully performed their duty not only to the Allied wounded, but who had cared also for the German soldiers, now suffered the indignity of being sent to the rear in open horse-drawn wagons, in a drizzling rain with no protection save their army capes. Our blood boiled and I know the nurses felt their humiliation, although they smiled as they passed, wishing us *bonne chance.*

The English marched smartly by, nearly a hundred of them. No wonder that the Huns hated them, for their spirit could not be broken. These men had been overworked, and underfed even to the point of death, yet they were as cheerful that morning as if they were going on a holiday. Their rear was brought up by two-wheeled stretcher carriers piled high with their packs.

At six the convoy fell in line. The English led, followed by the French. The line dragged out for over half a mile. At last we were really bound for the rear. The roads were sloppy from the drizzling rain, but we found this was better for marching than a bright day and dusty roads.

We—and when I say we, I mean all of the Allied personnel of the hospital except the nurses and doctors, numbering five or six hundred—made up a convoy marching on foot. We soon learned our route lay through Bazoche, on the other side of the Vesle River. From Bazoche, we took the first road north,

crossing the hills between the Vesle and the Aisne. Near Maisy we crossed the Aisne and were herded into a farmyard surrounded by barbed wire, and not far from the village of Beaurieux. I never felt so much like an animal as that afternoon when I arrived, footsore and tired. The barns and cowsheds were our quarters, and dirty straw our bedding. It was here that I became acquainted with that troublesome little pest of the trenches, the cootie. We were companions for the next six weeks, a pleasure which he alone enjoyed.

Immediately upon our arrival we were lined up and counted, so that the guards who had brought us over could deliver us to the keeper of the farm. The sergeant in charge was a typical Hun, red, fat faced, with little piggish eyes, his head set on a bull neck, and his whole appearance that of a man whose only delight in life is cruelty and dissipation. When he gave an order he fairly bellowed, and if the order were slow in being carried out he went into a rage, waving his arms and stamping the ground.

That night for supper we formed in fours. The line was long, and by the time I reached the improvised kitchen, the coffee, made from roasted barley, was only lukewarm, and tasteless. The ration of bread, a slice about two inches thick, was of the same quality as the black bread that we had at the hospital.

We had walked about seventeen kilometers. Our packs had grown heavy and it was only by frequent rests that we were able to keep going. The march was hardest on the old Frenchmen who had been

working in the hospital because they were too old for active fighting in the lines. Many of them had been prisoners before, and others had been wounded and transferred to non-combatant work. It was pitiful to see them struggling along with their packs, trying to keep up with the convoy.

Along the road we had seen evidences of the shelling and fighting. Here and there were fresh graves, those of the Allies being marked simply "Englander" or "Französisch," with a new wooden cross. The bridge across the Vesle near Bazoche had been blown up, and a temporary one erected. On the road we passed German infantry and transports going to the front, although this movement was not as heavy as during the days immediately after our capture.

That night more prisoners arrived at the farm, most of them being Americans. Aside from the few who had come into the hospital wounded these were the first we had seen. They had fared worse than we at the hospital, having only the clothes on their backs. Many of them were without blouses, and none had overcoats. Some were still wearing their helmets, and others had ripped the lining out of the helmets and were wearing them for caps.

They seemed very young to me, after having been with the French for so long. They were full of American "pep," and while they were not averse to telling their experiences, there was no bragging in relating how "our boys" were giving the boche the surprise of his life.

The barn became quiet, the whispering ceased, and

the men on the piles of straw dropped off to sleep too tired to heed our filthy surroundings.

At daybreak we were up, forming the coffee line in the muddy courtyard. The German sergeant in charge walked back and forth along the line, taking every possible opportunity to exhibit his temper, and flying into a rage without the least provocation.

We had scarcely finished the barley coffee and black bread when the order was given to fall in. Another count and another delay, before we finally swung our packs.

"*Achtung!*" rang out the German order. At six o'clock the column moved down the road headed south for Œuilly.

I had been in the Aisne valley for over a year with the French army. I had seen its villages, those which were not mere piles of crumbling stone, crowded with French troops *en repos*. I had worked over its roads, crossed its broken bridges, and seen the havoc wrought in a valley once beautiful. I had shared the tiring drudgery of the work behind the lines with the Frenchmen as I had shared their pleasures over a bottle of their best wine. I had caught the spirit of France from personal contact.

That morning a feeling of depression came over me as, footsore, I passed over the same roads to see the Germans quartered in the villages. I resented the Hun occupation as if it had been my own land.

A freight train lay on the siding near Œuilly, and much to our distress we recognized the French nurses and doctors who had been at the hospital as they

stood in the doors of the last two cars waving to us as we passed. What more indignities were they to suffer?

"*Sacre nom de Dieu! C'est terrible!*" an old Frenchman murmured at my side.

At Bourg-et-Comin we began the ascent of the Chemin-des-Dames, walking slowly and sweating under our packs. The Chemin-des-Dames, so called from the name of the road that runs along its summit, is a plateau north of the Aisne River. The Germans had been entrenched on the northern side, and the French on the southern since March, 1917, neither able to dislodge the other until October of the same year when the Germans had been pushed back to the Ailette River.

It was here that a German guard spied Lockwood, Heckert, and me, walking with the Frenchmen. He undoubtedly thought that we should be in the rear of the column with the English and the Americans. The full meaning of his angry command was clear, but we were so foolish as to try to argue.

"*Lose ihr Schweine!*" yelled the guard as he threw a cartridge into the breech of his rifle. We did not linger.

In a ravine, south of the Chemin-des-Dames proper, we passed the remains of what had been the village of Vendresse, now merely a heap of stones scattered by the continual pounding of shells through four years of war.

Crossing the Chemin-des-Dames was tedious as the torn and muddy road stretched up the long ascent.

Transport wagons drawn by small Russian ponies splashed through the mud holes; caissons and guns lumbered along, followed by tired Huns in their dirty uniforms of field gray; and now and then a heavy truck with steel spring tires rumbled to the rear with plunder or to the front with supplies. Passing it all, or being passed, the long column of prisoners continued wearily. As the day grew hotter, the weight of our packs seemed to increase, and we shifted the load from one position to another.

Dugouts built into the sharp slope lined the road, some intact, others caved in and crumbling. A few gun emplacements stood empty, the camouflage flapping gently in the breeze. Old equipment lay scattered along the road, haversacks, shell casings, unexploded shells and bombs, and now and then a shattered car or an abandoned rifle, all added to the wretchedness of the view.

We were now crossing what was no-man's-land prior to the German advance in May. Here as before, one shell-hole joined the next, forming a desolate stretch of land obstructed by torn wire entanglements, cut by jagged trenches, blown to pieces, fought over, taken and retaken, and now left in its waste while a new battlefield was in the making to the south. No sign of habitation, no movement on the ravaged landscape except the procession of which we formed a part, only the devastated slopes, the burnt logs lying among the weeds that struggled to efface the barrenness with a bit of color. That was the battlefield of yesterday. I wondered if the last two months had

seen the Valley of the Marne laid waste in a similar manner.

We passed a lone British prisoner working on the road, filling in the shell-holes with crushed rock.

"Hi, Tommy, what's your outfit?" sang out one of the Englishmen in our column.

"Royal Army Medical Corps—" he replied with a weary smile, but I did not catch the number of the regiment, though I shall always remember his drawn, tired expression, his lean features, and his bent back, too exhausted to straighten up as we passed.

While at the hospital I had heard of the small prison camp near Mont Notre Dame and had seen a few of the prisoners who were working on ammunition dumps and roads. They had come into the grounds on several occasions in quest of such food and clothing as they could pick up from us who were more fortunate. Their tales were not encouraging, or their condition hopeful, for they were living on water soup and black bread, both in small quantities, while their taskmasters demanded long hours. The Russian prisoners were in a worse plight. Their clothing was little better than rags. Like famished animals, their hunger forced them to hunt for food in the swill barrels near the kitchen.

I felt that we in the convoy, who were non-combatants, who had been taken as a unit, and who had worked as a unit at the hospital, probably would be kept together and repatriated together. I did not let myself dwell on the future. I merely hoped for the best.

The long hours dragged on. The descent of the Chemin-des-Dames was easier, and we reached the Ailette River at midday. The roads were still packed when the guards ordered a halt. The march, on practically an empty stomach, had left us ravenous, but we had to satisfy ourselves with a small ration of black bread and jam washed down with water. Fifteen kilometers since six o'clock—no wonder that we were tired!

The lack of German supply parks along the road surprised me. I had expected to see huge ammunition dumps and stations piled with lumber and other trench equipment, but I saw none. Perhaps the Germans were short of supplies or had moved all to the south during their advance.

While lying there a party of German officers, with their immaculate uniforms, black shining helmets, and decorations, passed, presenting a striking contrast to the bedraggled army through which they picked their way. One officer, a handsome young fellow, noticed us.

"Americans?" he called out.

"Yes!" answered one of the men.

"You're a long way from Broadway, boys," he remarked with a chuckle, and then added with a sneer, "and it'll be a hell of a long time before you'll get back!"

Going on we passed the desolate and scarred village of Chamouille, and started to climb another line of hills. The road behind us was still congested with traffic, as was the road along the Ailette River going

north. I turned and took my last view of that war-worn sector of France. From that time on we were to see the other half—the half that was occupied by the Germans. Often during the months that I had been with the French army I had wondered what lay behind the Hun lines. To me the line had always seemed like the border of France with nothing beyond except what the imagination could bring forth.

The summit was reached. Before us green hills rose in the distance out of a vast green plain. The barrenness had changed suddenly to abundant fertility. We had stepped into a new land. The faint roll of artillery behind us was the only indication that we were, or had been, in the vicinity of the battlefield. In the distance, situated on a small plateau, could be seen the city of Laon. The cathedral rose, a single spire above the city, standing out clear against the soft light of the afternoon horizon. At first I did not realize that that was Laon, our destination, for it seemed too far to be reached before nightfall.

As we descended farther, the poplars along the roadside hid the view, and we approached unawares the village of Bruyères. Our unmeasured steps sounded through the streets as if in answer to the expressions of curiosity with which the Germans watched us as we passed. A few French signs remained over the doors of the shops and fewer French civilians, prisoners since 1914, lingered in the doorways smiling upon us sadly. We were leaving behind all that was French. The sign, *Nach Laon*,

made us realize that we were going into a territory more thoroughly under German domination. The very notices in heavy German script over the stores impressed us with this fact more strongly than did the great predominance of German soldiers. *Kommandantur* replaced the word *Marie* over the town hall with a certain cruel military significance.

Leaving the village, the road followed the railroad line to the foot of the plateau on which stood Laon. Between the tall shade trees we could see the cool green meadows and the fields; the whole countryside offered a tempting view.

After a short rest we started on the last five kilometers. It seemed as though we could neither rise nor bring ourselves to walk another step. Our backs ached, our feet were sore, our tongues were dry, and our packs seemed too heavy to be worth the trouble of carrying them farther. As the command was given, the column straggled back into the road and the rear of this broken formation was brought up by those whose every step was painful. Would we ever reach our destination, whatever it might be? Past one or two large residences with green lawns behind iron gates, and stately doorways visible through the shrubbery, up the winding road we continued until we entered the city proper. The climb was over.

Our guards led us through a narrow thoroughfare crowded with shops. The population, French civilians for the most part, moved to the edge of the sidewalk, asking hasty questions in their hope of gathering some news of the front, openly showing their

pleasure when hearing that the Allies were again on the advance. French children walked along beside us chatting persistently until a guard rudely shoved them away. An old woman burst into tears when she saw us, mumbling something about *mes enfants*. A girl smiled with delight when she saw the Americans, for it revealed to her that our soldiers were in the lines.

Although it was nearly seven in the evening, many of the stores were open, their windows sparingly displaying goods. That hasty glimpse of Laon was all that I was to have and it did not satisfy my curiosity as to the treatment of the civilians by the invaders.

We halted at the eastern end of the city, dropping our packs where we stood. Several of the men left the line to fill their canteens from a faucet on the curbing. An old man and his son, realizing that we were thirsty, brought out a tall pitcher of water. He had managed to empty three of these before the guard interfered and drove us back into the line with the exclamation, "*Schweinerei!*"

From where we stood we could see our prison. Before the war it had been a French armory, a large massive stone building of four stories. On the roof and at the windows were prisoners calling to us in their attempt to learn the news.

The head of the column was passing slowly down the incline that the narrow alleyway cut through the outer wall. We followed, the guards counting us as we passed. Beyond, we crossed the stone bridge over the empty moat, through a tunnel, through the inner wall and into the prison court.

We had walked twenty-eight kilometers that day. The fact that our guards were not harder on us was probably due to the fact that they also had to walk the same distance and naturally made the trip comfortable for themselves.

Laon prison, the segregating camp for prisoners bound for the interior of Germany, will ever remain fixed in my memory as the filthiest hole in the territory occupied by the Germans. And the prisoners who occupied it will long remember their pitiful condition. Prisoners who had been working behind the German lines were sent here, ragged, exhausted, and often absolutely sick, but not broken in spirit.

The prison grounds covered the eastern end of the Laon plateau and were cut off from the city proper by two earth walls on either side of a deep but empty moat. A bridge and tunnel gave entrance to the front prison yard which was about forty feet wide and extended the length of the building. An arcade, or large open hall, opposite the entrance, ran through the building, opening up in the rear yard which was larger and used by the prisoners except for a few hours in the morning. A high wire fence enclosed the southern and eastern sides of the yard, while on the northern side ran a long two-story building at the eastern end of which were trees and a bit of lawn open to the prisoners. Between this lawn and the beginning of the wire fence rose a sharp mound which overlooked the rear yard. On this always stood one or more of the guards.

When we had passed over the bridge and through

the tunnel we found the head of the column had begun to pass through the kitchen at the northern end of the prison building. Lined up in fours as we were, I soon saw that only two lines were passing through the kitchen and these very slowly. As we proceeded I saw that our rations were to be a small sack of hard-tack, one sack for two men, and a cup of so-called tea. Being handed the sack we were required to empty it and hand it back. This meant that our hat or anything available had to serve the purpose of a receptacle. For holding the tea, and later for the soup which was only served at noon, I was lucky enough to have an English mess kit, while many of the men had only an empty tin can or the tin container of a German or French gas mask. The tea was ladled out from huge vats and served as we passed. The kitchen was a mere shack and the cooking done in the crudest manner. At times, as I noticed later, the kitchen floor was often under an inch of slimy water and the place stunk from the refuse lying about.

We were more interested in our food after receiving our rations than in our immediate surroundings. The Englishman with me squatted on the ground, following the example of the other groups about us, and began dividing the hard-tack. It seemed so ridiculous to me to be dividing the hard-tack cracker by cracker, as if it were a thing of real value, which in fact it was at the time, and which I more fully realized as the days passed.

When we looked around for a place to sleep we dis-

covered that the bunks in the building were all occupied and we were informed we would find room in the cellar of the building on the northern side. Upon making investigation we decided to camp there for the night.

The cellar was a series of vaults running the length of the building. On the floor lay a covering of musty straw over rocks and débris. By the light of a candle stub Heckert selected a place next to the wall where we spread our blankets. As I dropped off to sleep I realized how prisonlike our surroundings were. The supper, practically bread and water, and the arched roof of the vaults added to the atmosphere of being in a dungeon apart from the world.

The next morning about five o'clock a guard came down the passage, stumbling over the bodies of sleeping men and awakening us with his guttural curses. We rolled out and packed our belongings, only to find when we came up into the open that it was barely daylight.

Prisoners who had been in camp for some time warned us that if we wished to retain any of our possessions that we should carry them with us constantly, for stealing was the prevailing practice and articles disappeared if left for even a moment. We soon became accustomed to carrying our packs with us wherever we went.

Unless a person has lived in the midst of great poverty it would be hard to visualize the destitution to which the prisoners were subjected. Those who were dependent on the Germans for food and had

been for some time were mere skeletons, especially those who had worked on the roads and the ammunition dumps. We who came from the hospital were the exceptions, for we had had a living ration and still had a little in reserve. The clothes of many were in tatters; some had only threadbare trousers, ragged shirts, and worn-out shoes.

The mass of prisoners as a whole represented what remained of once fine fighting units which had gone heroically into action and by some miracle had come out alive to face a living death. The German system whereby a prisoner's spirit might be broken failed in the great majority of cases. I cannot recall a single instance of an Englishman, Frenchman, or American who would not have been more than willing to have gone back to the front could he have escaped from Germany. As was often remarked, the Allies could have had no better than these same men who were rotting in the camps. They were imbued with a burning hatred for the enemy, a hatred that had grown with the insults and privations heaped upon them, and once back in the lines they would have gone through hell fire for the sake of revenge.

When we reached the yard the prisoners were beginning to crowd towards the kitchen. Three or four thousand prisoners were there, I should judge, most of whom were English and French, with a few Italians and Americans. Feeding these took an unusually long time and the three-hour wait was hardly worth the can of imitation coffee that was served us. With

a little of the hard-tack saved from the previous night we made our meager breakfast.

Once through the kitchen we were again in the front yard of the prison. Here, as we learned from other prisoners, we were to be kept until a detail cleaned up the yard and buildings, and from this place also still other details were to be picked for various work in German depots in Laon or for road work. These details left the prison every morning, walking a mile or two to their work, working all day, then walking back in the evening. Quite naturally the prisoners attempted to evade this service. Many found hiding places on a rise of ground near the kitchen, others managed to slip by a guard and get on the roof of the building, but in nearly every instance they were discovered.

Most of the guards were young fellows who had never seen action at the front, and who perhaps for this very reason wished the more to show their authority, which they exercised quite freely with the aid of long cudgels. It was not an uncommon sight to see a guard strike a prisoner again and again in a fit of unprovoked anger. Our blood boiled at such treatment but it was better to hold our peace than give the Hun an excuse for further outrages.

Guarding the entrances to the rear yard were armed soldiers. To slip by these was at times an easy matter. One man could attract the guard and hold his attention while the others slipped by him. Once in the rear yard there was little chance of being taken for work. After the details left the remaining pris-

oners were herded into the moat on the southern side of the prison.

Once there our worries were over for the morning. The conditions seemed too good to be true with the trees and grass and clear sky. The men lay around in groups playing cards, visiting, or sleeping. But usually the search for the always present cootie was the first task of the morning. The spectacle of the men in all manner of undress busily engaged in hunting for the pesky little animal was made more comical by the guard's haughty air of disdain. All prisoners were swine in the eyes of the Germans, but that name which they so constantly apply to others is the only one that really fits them perfectly.

"The best cigarettes I ever tasted were Fatimas." I could not help overhearing the conversation of a group behind me. The man who spoke had an English accent.

"Must have been in America, Buddy," came the answer.

"Yes, worked in Arizona for nine years."

My curiosity was at once aroused, and I turned to the group and asked, "What part of Arizona?"

"Oh, you would not know the place," the Englishman replied.

"Maybe not," I answered, "but where was it?"

"Bisbee."

"Perhaps you know Mr. —— and Mr. ——," I questioned, trying to remember if I had seen him at home. His jaw dropped as he listened to me.

"You bet I do," and we nearly dropped into each others' arms.

Stanley Hancock, so he signed his name, from Cornwall, England, was the first man I had met from home on that side of the water. Thus began a friendship that lasted during the next five months.

As the noon hour approached we were led into the yard. A long delay preceded the serving of the soup. That soup resembled a most disgusting swill. I venture that a good American farmer would not feed it to his pigs. The ingredients consisted of sliced carrots and cabbage boiled in water with a little meal added. It must have been standing for a long time before it was served, for the odor and taste were worse than decayed sauerkraut. But we ate it—we had to, or starve.

That night we slept in the prison in one of the rooms on the fourth floor where we had managed to secure bunks. Five or six of us had formed an offensive and defensive alliance, and one man was chosen to watch our belongings until we turned in for the night.

The room was crowded. Frenchmen sat around an improvised table chatting over a game of cards. A few English Tommies who had obtained some flour, probably while on detail at some German depot, had rigged a small stove and were baking cakes on the warm bricks. Men crowded in the doorway or lounged on their bunks, always keeping an eye on their possessions. By nightfall the July atmosphere was stifling. One window at each end of the room

was insufficient. An open bucket serving as a latrine tainted such air as came in the door.

I lay awake a long time that night, revolting at the conditions to which we were subjected, wondering when we were to move on, and where, and more especially trying to anticipate an Allied advance.

A few of us had convinced ourselves that we would be in America within a year. I felt sure that the war could not last more than six months. German morale was broken, German supplies were short, and German efficiency was weakening while the American strength was increasing daily.

The next day passed as the former. Rumors led us to believe that we would be moved into the interior within a day or two. The French and English officers and nurses had arrived from the hospital, after a tiresome journey by freight, but we did not have the pleasure of seeing them.

Just after dinner—that is, midday soup—a young guard was trying to collect a detail. A number of us, Americans and English, were lying near the fence in the sun. He came over waving his club and yelling: "*Komm, lose, arbeit*" (Come, hurry, work). No one moved except a Tommy, who pointed to his Red Cross band on his sleeve and said, "*Rothes Kreuz, wir wollen nicht arbeiten*" (The Red Cross does not work). Non-combatants were supposed to be exempt from work.

"*Es macht nichts aus, Schwein, komm, lose, lose.*" (It makes no difference, pigs, come, hurry.)

A few of us rose and followed. He lined us up

and then turned to find more recruits for his dirty work. His back once turned the line disappeared as if the earth had opened up. I did not wait to see if he succeeded in getting enough men.

That evening we were issued a traveling ration—Limburger cheese, or bloodwurst. Each man received about two ounces of one or the other.

The ration made it seem fairly certain that we would be moving into the interior of Germany. We were more than anxious to go, for no camp could be worse than the present one and we knew that good treatment increased with our distance from the front.

One of the prisoners who was permanently stationed at Laon was selling food which he had stolen. I managed to get a can of meat and a can of jam, but at an exorbitant price, and marks were scarce. At the canteen we could buy an inferior grade of tobacco, in fact, that was all the canteen sold.

But a man could hardly call a cigarette his own. Once it was lit, some less fortunate prisoner always asked for "butts on you, buddy," or "short end, after you," if he were English. To refuse was to be selfish, though your own butts meant "makin's" later on. Nothing was wasted.

In preference to the cellar or prison building, we rolled up in our blankets that evening on a grass plot in the yard. The odor from the open latrine in the center of the yard did not help matters, but the air was fresher.

The morning of July 31st found us rolling our packs at dawn. As we fell in for coffee, each was surmising

if we would be moved that day. Once through the coffee line, the order was given that those who arrived in prison at the time we did would leave, together with a few others. About nine o'clock we began forming. As Lockwood, Heckert, and I had come in with the French, we decided we would stay with them. Finally the head of the line, formed by French, of whom there were over six hundred, began to move through the gate. As we three Americans started to pass the guard who was counting the prisoners, we were stopped. "*Amerikaners?*" he demanded. "*Ja!*" we replied. And with loud curses we were ordered back with the other Americans, about ninety in number. We followed the English.

The line passed out slowly. Would we never be out and on our way?

As we passed over the bridge of the moat, we were handed a further traveling ration of hard-tack, one sack per man, and that for three days, as we learned later.

Outside the prison, in the square, we were halted, recounted, and counted again. By ten o'clock we were marching to the station, following the road on the northern side of the city, which dropped off the plateau to the plain.

What small portion of the city we saw that morning was fairly bustling with German soldiers and officers.

Twice we were stopped and forced to wait, probably while the stupid German sergeant in charge tried to untangle his orders.

A few civilians attempted to engage in conversation with us, but the guard, ever alert, always interfered. Now and then a German soldier passed and spoke to us in friendly English to ask where we were going. Of course we did not know.

It was nearly noon when we reached the station and turned into the freight yard. Naturally enough we believed we would entrain immediately, but an hour dragged into two, and two into the whole afternoon. The sun blazed down upon us. We sought the shade of the cars, only to be sent back to ranks. We tried to get water, but were harshly denied the privilege of helping ourselves from a hydrant. As the hours dragged on, one guard exhibited pity toward us to the extent of letting us fill our canteens.

It became noticeable as time wore on that a German soldier often would show a degree of kindness to those whom he was guarding, providing an officer was not around. Once the officer appeared the soldier would display all the animosity possible.

We were fortunate, however, on that trip, for our guards were all old men of the Landsturm, and on the whole were quite decent to us.

About six o'clock our train pulled into the freight yard, a train made up of freight cars and old third-class coaches. Immediately the guards began counting the column into lots of forty and assigning us to the cars. Lockwood, Heckert, and I were fortunate in that we were placed in a coach and were together. As the trip lengthened, our quarters became cramped. Four of us were occupying the vestibule, a space

about two and a half feet wide and five or six feet long.

The train started.

"Thank God that's over with, and may the next place not be so bad," someone remarked, as we pulled past the station, crowded with German soldiers going on leave.

With our packs for seats, we arranged ourselves as comfortably as possible for the journey, the destination or length of which was unknown. Of course we were going into the interior of Germany, but where?

The train was headed northeast across the plains. The city of Laon set on the plateau stood out like an ancient acropolis behind us, only to appear lower and lower as we proceeded. I knew that we would either have to go northeast or southeast to cross the German border, and by continuing in the direction we were going we would have to pass through Belgium before we crossed the Rhine. Once across the Rhine—there I refused to reflect further, for I believed wherever we were bound, our sojourn would not be long. The Allies would win—on that I pinned my faith.

Long trains of munitions, gun carriages, trucks, and military equipment stood idle on the sidings as we passed. Empty freight cars and broken material lay at every small station. This was probably some of the worn-out rolling stock that Germany in her shortage of men was forced to abandon. Among the German coaches and cars I noticed those of the French.

After passing Mézières we had our supper, which

consisted of a slice of black bread with some of the jam I had gotten at the prison. We realized then how fortunate we were to have our own small extra supply of food. That one slice of bread was little enough, yet it relieved the sting of our appetites, and with a poor cigarette afterwards we settled down for the night. But settling down for the night meant merely sitting up as comfortably as the cramped space would allow. Sleep was practically impossible. Like all foreign freight cars, the wheels seemed to be square.

Towards morning we dozed off, only to awake at daylight stiff and tired.

Whenever the train stopped, we dropped off to stretch our legs and to get water. The guards who occupied the last two coaches got off with us, walked the length of the train with their rifles slung over their shoulders, and kept a close eye on us, keeping us near the train and not permitting us to visit with civilians.

We had crossed the Belgian border. As we rolled through Namur, the civilians cheered the train, waving and calling words of encouragement that were only drowned by the rumble of the train.

Belgium, Namur, Liège, these names brought back memories of the early days of the war when that little nation made its heroic stand of eleven days—just long enough to save France. The country seemed too peaceful to breed a warlike nation, yet it was that same love of home which made them fight so stubbornly.

The farms rested in even plots along the tracks, cut by many canals, that wound through the hills.

While stopping outside the city of Liège for a moment that evening, an old peasant woman tried to give us some carrots, in fact we did manage to get one or two bunches before the guards could stop her. They were acceptable, for we had traveled all that day with no rations save the hard-tack issued at Laon. The journey was proving exhausting to those who had no food of their own.

Near the German border, the guards came with huge sacks, ordering us to throw our *briquets* (cigar lighters) and matches in them, saying that it was *verboten* to carry them across the border. Very few were given up, the men hiding them in their clothing, in preference to losing a souvenir, or the possibility of having no light for cigarettes.

That night passed as the previous one. Our bones were beginning to ache and our bodies were too tired for us to sleep. Our vestibule, which we thought would be more comfortable than a freight car, was worse than a closet.

The other men—all Americans—in the car proper, were stretched out in all postures on the seats and floor, and one or two had even managed to climb up on the baggage rack above the seats.

At midnight, at a little station beyond Liège, the guards aroused us and announced coffee. Coffee only in name, but it was hot, and the interruption in the journey, the falling in line, tramping over the tracks to the station kitchen, even the curses of the

guards were a relief from the monotonous ride and the crowded car.

We jerked along or were delayed by long stops on some siding and the next morning we pulled into Cologne. We were now in Germany proper. As we lay in the railroad yards, German men and boys—mostly boys—who were working there as trainmen, came up trying to buy clothes, blankets, and shoes. In fact almost anything such as soap, chocolate, or canned meat could have been sold. One American did trade his shoes for a loaf of bread, and then put on an old pair of slippers in their stead. Tobacco and bread was what the prisoners wanted. Such exchanges as were made were always to the advantage of the Germans. Cigarettes of a very poor quality sold five for a mark.

This desire on the part of the civilians to obtain second-hand clothing, soap, and other articles illustrated in what straits the people were and the scarcity of these articles. Second-hand clothing, from the back of a lousy prisoner, appeared to me to be about the last thing one would wish.

Working there in the railroad yards, as switchmen and laborers, were a great number of young German women dressed in bloomers. They were husky and healthy looking, doing the work that a few years before was performed only by men. Women and boys and old men were practically running the railroads of Germany in the absence of the former employees at the front.

That portion of Cologne which we saw in passing

on the train was typical of any American city. From Cologne south we followed the Rhine through a country rich in verdure, and densely populated.

In the late afternoon we passed through Coblenz. As we lay in the station a German troop train pulled alongside. The raillery that ensued between soldiers and prisoners was a real entertainment. The prisoners laughed at the Germans' boast of victory. Cigarettes were purchased from soldiers, while other soldiers wanted our blankets. On this occasion there was no apparent air of hostility shown on either side and even the guards joined in the conversation.

In the afternoon we stopped at a little station where a large soup kitchen was located for troop trains. The barley soup issued was quite acceptable. Second helpings were allowed and the soup plates were even provided. This was the first hot meal we had had in three days. The men fairly gorged themselves, returning to the train happy for the moment.

This lack of food en route, whether accidental or intentional, was not out of keeping with German treatment of prisoners. We had heard rumors behind our lines of mistreatment of prisoners, but so far we had suffered very little in comparison to what we were to hear from prisoners taken in the early part of the war.

The third night of our journey dragged through, hour by hour. What little sleep we were getting before dawn was interrupted by the guards who awoke us. The train had stopped in a large station.

"*Komm, lose! lose! lose!*"

We swung our packs and tumbled out on the platform, where we formed fours. Then followed a long tramp through the city streets, now deserted at the early hour of four-thirty.

We were in Giessen, in Hesse, and were going out to the prison camp on the outskirts of the city.

As we filed through the prison gate, we were counted and let into an enclosure near the kitchen. Immediately soup was served; this promptness was quite unusual.

Broad daylight had come by the time we had finished. We waited, wondering if this were to be our permanent camp.

From what we could see of the camp, it was clean, and if the soup just issued were a fair example of our food, the situation was at least better than at Laon. But as the morning passed and we were not assigned barracks, we realized our stay was merely temporary.

Then food was issued the prisoners in the form of hard bread and canned goods. This came from committees of prisoners' relief of the various nations, including French, English, and Italians, but not the Americans. This was a disappointment to us, but there was nothing we could do. One or two of us did manage to buy some hard bread from a German who worked for a committee. Of course it was graft on his part, and of the worst kind.

Postals, with blank spaces for us to write whether we were well or not, were distributed and mailed. This was the first chance many had had to get word back that they were alive.

A canteen furnished a few odds and ends, mostly tobacco. I saw some cubes in a glass jar which resembled caramels, and bought a dozen, thinking it was candy. If I had only thought a moment I would have realized that sugar was at a premium. To my disgust, they were bouillon cubes. In a burst of enthusiasm, I purchased a German grammar, written in French. It took my last mark. An hour later I came to the conclusion that my stomach might need more food than my brain, and sold it to a Frenchman.

At twelve the guards gave us orders. As we passed out of the gate, a large loaf of black bread was issued every two men. The loaves were twice the size of the regular ones. Later I learned that the generosity was merely for show, as representatives from Switzerland were there to inspect the camp and observe the treatment of prisoners.

The march from the camp to the station gave me my first view of a German city. The buildings, the streets, and even the people, were more of the American type than any I had seen on the continent. Their attitude towards us was passive. A few collected to watch us tramp past. Now and then a child would throw some harmless insult at us or make faces at the passing column.

"Our big strong guard will protect me from such women as you," laughed an artilleryman behind me as a little girl twisted her face into a childish expression of hate.

By twelve-thirty we were on our train again. This

time we were able to learn that we were going to Langensalza, in Saxony, where we would be permanently. This time we were also fortunate in getting seats in a coach which was not overcrowded.

From Giessen on, we were passing through a rolling country. The golden wheat fields stretched for miles along the tracks, and the villages nestled in hollows, only a few miles apart. I wondered at the time whether we would be put to work, and if so, whether I would be fortunate enough to be assigned to a farm. The answer came within the next month.

CHAPTER IV

LANGENSALZA

We arrived at the *Kreigsgefangenenlager*, Langensalza, the next morning, August 4th, at five o'clock. We were led through the gate, over the corduroy road that ran the length of the camp, and into an enclosure. Our guide had made a mistake and we were taken to another enclosure, lined up five deep, and counted.

Coffee and bread were issued. The French were assigned two barracks and the Americans, English, and Italians one, but later the Italians were moved to the French barracks, due to trouble between the Americans and the English and the Italians.

The second day we were registered, filling in cards on which we gave our names, nationality, army, organization, civilian trade, education, and a few other details. Then we were assigned prison numbers. The next day we were issued these numbers, printed on two little square pieces of muslin, and told to sew one on our coats and the other on our overcoats.

We were instructed by a young officer, who spoke English, that we would be treated well so long as we behaved; that we were under Prussian military law,

and would be tried and punished according to that law. His accent was peculiar but his attitude rather friendly; however, that did not lighten our burden, or relieve us from the thought that we were to be in quarantine for two weeks.

In the afternoon, we were sent over to the delouser. The process was similar to that in most American camps. The prisoners objected very strongly to having their heads shaved, but to no avail. We went to the shears like sheep, and the large automatic clippers in a short time made us look like real convicts. While this was going on our clothes were going through a steam sterilizer. After the bath the clothes began to arrive. A German called out the numbers and we claimed our own.

Among our number was an Indian trooper, with turban and long hair and beard. Much to my surprise, the Germans permitted him to retain his hair and beard. To have lost them he would have lost his caste on return to India. The German attitude in his case shows they possessed at least a bit of consideration.

Our barracks, or the room of the barracks we were occupying, was able to accommodate perhaps three hundred men. The bunks were arranged in three rows which ran the length of the room, and were not built against the wall.

The lack of food during those two weeks in quarantine, and the two weeks immediately following, represented my starvation period in Germany. The day began with roll call at six, after which coffee ar-

rived in huge buckets of which there was not always enough to go around. Then a detail arrived with the black bread, which was issued one loaf for seven men. Another roll call came at one, and another at four-thirty. Beet soup was served at noon and night.

A notice in English was posted informing us of certain restrictions. We were not to smoke in the barracks, or to lie on the bunks ("beds" as the notice read) in the daytime, and numerous other small things were prohibited.

During the afternoon of the second day, the English prisoners who had been in camp for many months sent to us three or four blankets filled with food which they generously contributed. The old prisoners—French and English—were receiving regularly parcels from home and from their relief committees. Moreover, there was a committee of prisoners representing their respective organizations in camp.

The English received their parcels every week from England and were also issued hard bread by their committee in camp. The French received most of their food from their committee in camp.

The three or four blankets of food sent over by the English were distributed among the English and Americans. When distributed it did not amount to very much per man, but we were careful and made it last for three days. Nothing ever tasted quite so delicious as those crackers with a bit of canned beef.

One morning soon after our arrival our German officer informed us we would be inoculated against cholera and typhus. A German and an English doctor

made the injections. We had no choice in the matter—we had to take them. But for all we knew, they might have been injecting disease germs into our systems. It had been reported that such was done in some camps. As time went on, however, we found it was not so in our case. It seemed to me that the German doctor took delight in sticking that needle into us. He worked quickly and deftly, with an evil twinkle in his eyes. On the other hand the English doctor, a young fellow, worked with less skill, but with gentleness.

Many of the prisoners were selling anything they had to other prisoners outside of our enclosure, and with the money buying cigarettes or trading their articles directly for food. I went through my pack in the hope of finding something with which I could part and which would bring either food, tobacco, or money. My Gillette razor and fountain pen seemed the only articles worth while. After a great deal of arguing and haranguing through the barbed wire fence that shut us off from the other prisoners, I was able to sell both for the sum of thirty-six marks. As I was to use Lockwood's razor from then on—a medical razor he had helped himself to at the hospital—I shared the money with him. The money was soon spent for tobacco and biscuits.

We were permitted to write two letters and four postal cards a month. The paper was of a prescribed form and orders were that we were not to mention the war. We took it for granted that anything said in criticism of the Germans would be censored. Very

little else was left for us to write except to ask for food and clothing. As before, I wrote first to Major W. H. Brophy, in Paris, then to my company commander, and later, home. Those letters were always very unsatisfactory to me, being limited in length and contents.

About this time we were ordered to turn over all written matter for censorship. I had destroyed everything of value, so that my pocketbook contained only a few photographs, and a small card on which I kept an abbreviated diary of my movements. To my surprise, everything was returned with the censor's seal stamped on the back.

Books were sent us from the camp library to read, but these were not sufficient to go around. They included Shakespeare, *Pilgrim's Progress*, the Bible, and some old English novels. The books were a great help to the men in passing the long weary hours, although in many cases they would have preferred lighter reading.

Another order demanded that we change all money, French, English, or German, into war prisoners' money, *Kriegsgefangenengeld*. The exchange was somewhat lower than it should have been. For French money we received three and a half marks for five francs. The prisoners' money was issued as a hindrance to escape, and although civilians were forced to accept it, it always being redeemable for state money, they preferred the other. At the canteen in camp this was the only money accepted.

Our quarters became almost intolerable as the

confinement continued. The yard between the barracks was barely large enough to hold the prisoners at roll call. In rainy weather this yard became a mass of sticky mud, although it dried quickly in clear weather, becoming as hard as a pavement.

The three roll calls a day were a source of irritation and some amusement. The German sergeant, typical of his race, with his piggish eyes set in a red, bloated face, and his round head resting on a bull neck, attended every roll call with the dignity of a potentate. His broadsword clanked at his side, almost trailing on the ground. He inspected us frequently to see that our shoes were clean and our clothing in order. That was a joke, for how were we to keep our apparel in order with no equipment?

On several occasions he lost his temper, flying into a rage and bellowing orders which we could not understand. Twice he drew his clumsy sword, striking his victim with the flat side across his back. One morning he asked for volunteers for carpenter work and shoe repairing. Several French stepped forward, but none of the English or Americans.

We counted the days one by one as they dragged by. During the second week the French committee began issuing hard bread to the French, and also to the Americans, as we had no committee of our own. This was indeed a godsend. The biscuits were sent in huge cases, and divided so that we had about forty apiece which lasted us a week. The biscuits resembled buns and were three or four inches in diameter, and very hard. By boring small holes in

them, soaking them in water for a moment and then placing them in the sun for an hour, the result was that they swelled to almost double their size and tasted, at least to us, very delicious. It was by great restraint that we did not eat them the first day or two. Very few men made their ration last the whole week.

The process of delousing had been successful as far as that animal went, but the fleas could not be got rid of no matter what we did. They kept us awake at nights, biting persistently, to our great discomfiture. To scratch was to risk infection, so I just gave up and let them have their way.

The sanitation around our barracks was excellent. The Germans enforced certain rules with heavy penalties if disobeyed, and this was for our common good.

Nothing of particular interest happened during the two weeks of quarantine. Walking around our enclosure furnished our only exercise. Through the wire fence we could look out over the parade ground and watch soccer games, but these only took place in the evenings or on Sunday afternoons. The rest of the day we lay around visiting and swapping stories. Generally the conversation turned to food, delicious tempting food we had eaten back in the States—food that made our mouths water to think of, and to curse our luck for not being able to have it then. The war and the Germans came in for their share of our talk. Could our thoughts have been realized, the Empire and the Kaiser and his subjects would have gone to the lowest depths of hell to suffer untold tortures.

On August 20th the quarantine was lifted and we were permitted to wander at large in the camp, which contained about fifteen thousand men of all the Allied nationalities. Nearly half of these, however, were working in neighboring villages and cities, on farms, in mines, or in factories.

Double twelve-foot barbed wire fences enclosed the whole camp. At the gates armed guards were always on duty, and other guards were stationed at various points around the camp.

The barracks were immense. Each barrack was divided into three rooms, not connecting. Each room would comfortably house about two hundred men, that is, from six to seven hundred in each barrack. The barracks were situated around the large yard, which included the football field. In one corner of this field was a small barrack in which was located the postoffice, censor office, and one end was used as a storehouse for the English committee's food, although most of the food was kept at the committee tents, the French occupying two and the English one.

The fences of barbed wire were so arranged between barracks and fields that any portion of the camp could be shut off from the rest. That, of course, was in case of an uprising among the prisoners or in case of sickness and quarantine.

The hospital, set off from the rest of the camp, was forbidden territory without a pass. After we left quarantine, several of the English medical men who were with us when we arrived at Langensalza were

assigned work in the hospital. On the one occasion when I went there to see an American, I was not impressed with the cleanliness of the wards or the efficiency of the attendants. The patients were on cots. The nationalities were not segregated. From what I could learn there were not sufficient medicines and supplies to meet the demand.

The second day after our quarantine was lifted, all of the American prisoners were sent to Rastatt, where the American camp was situated, except twelve of us of the Medical Corps, and in our ignorance we believed we were better off remaining in Langensalza. We learned later that the American camp was by far the better of the two.

At the time of registration we had to establish our identity, either by papers or by our army dog tag, which gave our name, number, and rank. My own identification, a road pass issued me by the French army, was taken and not returned until a month before I left Germany. Many of the men had no identification, and the non-commissioned officers were worried for fear they would be classified as privates and put to work. As it later developed rank made practically no difference at Rastatt.

As the Americans marched out of camp I felt indeed like a stranger in a strange land. They had been the rank and file of the new American army; they had seen action as fierce as any of the poilus, and they had suffered slavery behind the German lines, only to leave unbroken in spirit, and their courage unimpaired by imprisonment.

That same morning, August 22d, we who remained moved with the French and English to other barracks, we being quartered with the English. Our numbers were changed and mine became 6.9740.

We settled down to the dull existence of prison life, living on German soup, barley coffee, and French biscuits; sleeping—when the fleas permitted—on bare boards, with only two blankets; answering roll calls at unreasonable hours, and doing such work as we could not avoid.

The working details were picked at the roll call immediately after breakfast, that is, about seven o'clock. The first job I got was loading manure from the pile near the pig pen, into a wagon which was taken out on the prison garden. In the afternoon we went out and spread it with a fork.

On another occasion, a detail of which I was a member spaded a beet field. That morning we worked hard as the guard who stood over us, allowed only a minute or two of rest at long intervals. Usually on detail we took our time, as the guard was indifferent as to how we worked.

One morning the detail list would be taken from one end of the roll call line, and on the next morning from the other. If we were fortunate enough not to be assigned, then we made ourselves scarce for the rest of the day, anticipating that an extra party might be called out. The guard had a habit of dropping into the barracks during the day and picking out anyone he saw. We soon learned where to go to avoid this by either going out on the parade ground

or to another barrack where the English non-commissioned officers, who were exempted from work, were quartered.

All manner of rumors drifted through camp concerning the war and ourselves. When we heard the rumor that we would be sent out on farms or to factories, we decided it could be no worse than living in confinement and dodging details in camp.

The rumor was finally verified when a call came for volunteers. The older prisoners advised us to accept. As for myself, and as did the other Americans, I decided it would be better to be sent. I did not wish to volunteer to work for any Hun. If they wanted me they would take me, and there would be no argument.

CHAPTER V

ESCHENBERGEN

On August 30th a party of us received our final orders. From all I could learn I was to be sent to a farm, while the other Americans together with some Englishmen were going to factories. Whatever the work might be and wherever we went we could always be returned to camp, if the circumstances warranted it.

Those of us who were in the Medical Corps had all objected to working, for according to international law we were not supposed to do any work save in a hospital, but the Germans laughed at our remonstrances.

Our guards took us to the station of Langensalza, a two-mile walk from the camp on the other side of the town. What little I saw of the town did not impress me as very unusual, although the houses were of typical German architecture. My guard—I felt like a hardened criminal having an armed guard all to myself—had little to say to me, and I doubt if I could have understood his jabber had he tried to carry on a conversation.

As we stood that morning on the station platform, the small group of prisoners chatted merrily, wishing

each other good luck in the lot that might befall them. The partial sense of freedom, the bright morning, with a breath of autumn, and the unknown that lay ahead, cheered us considerably.

I climbed on a third-class coach behind my guard, as the fellow overlooked politeness and his duty in mounting the coach ahead of me. It was with a feeling of curiosity, and I must admit it was with a holiday spirit, if not adventure, that I watched the farm land roll past the window. I then suddenly realized that it was harvest season, and I was probably to be given that work. This was all right, if they would only feed me sufficiently. I knew nothing about farming, and what little I would learn would do me no harm. At least it would be a healthy existence in the open air.

An hour's ride brought us to the little station of Baldtstadt, where my guard swung his pack and with a short "*komm*" to me we got off and started down the road, my guard in the lead as before. The country road was wide and well graded, a state highway I judged. Soon we left this, taking a small crossroad. Now and then we passed laborers working in the fields, most of whom were women.

My immediate attention was attracted by the apple and plum trees that lined the road, as shade trees do in America. The three-mile walk that followed did not seem long, as I was occupied clandestinely in helping myself to plums. Fruit never tasted so good to me as it did that afternoon. It was the first fruit I had eaten in months.

Through one village we passed and on to the next. In the second village, my guard led me to a large frame building with *Gasthof* painted across its front. We went upstairs. There in a large room were rows of beds on the three sides. I managed to understand this was where I was to sleep. Leaving my pack there, he took me over to a farmhouse and introduced me to my *chef* or boss.

Herr Karl Fleischbauer stuck out his hand in a friendly manner. Not wishing to incur enmity on first acquaintance I returned the greeting. I looked an elderly man in the face, a face pinched from open-air work and a narrow life. He was not of the usual German bulk and build, being rather slight and bent. He must have guessed my thoughts, as it was nearly two o'clock and I was hungry. On the kitchen table stood a pot of barley coffee and a pile of what I learned later were called tarts. He motioned me to sit down and *essen*.

There was no hesitancy on my part. I fell to work and made a meal of what was considered to be only tea. Three cups of coffee, with milk but no sugar, and as many tarts, revived my spirits. By the time I finished, my guard had finished talking with my boss, and had left. As I rose from the table Karl motioned to me to follow.

We went out the back door and I got my first view of a German farmyard. Immediately at my feet lay the manure pile, not four feet distant from the back steps. On the right of the yard ran the building that housed the goats, pigs, rabbits, chickens, and

geese, while the loft was used for hay. At the rear was the large barn for storing grain, for housing the large wagon, and for threshing by hand in winter. On the left ran the building that housed the five cows and four calves, while the loft contained hay. Next to this was a small shed for feed and potatoes, which was joined to the house by a roof over the wood pile. On my left and in the house proper was the horse stall with the door opening out on the manure pile. That explained the proximity of the manure pile to the house.

That was a typical German farmhouse, barns, and yard. The whole was so arranged that the house and barns joined, forming a hollow square, the center being the farmyard. The entrance to the yard was through a huge double door in the front of the house, the roof extending over it the width of the house, so that from the outside it appeared that the door opened up into the house, while as a matter of fact it opened into the courtyard.

Of the interior of the house I saw practically nothing except the kitchen where all the cooking was done and which served as a dining room. The room opened off of the hall on the left of the front, so that its one small window looked out on the road and allowed the old lady to keep in touch with most of her neighbors' comings and goings. As the road which passed by the house was the main street of the village and led to the other villages and on to Gotha, this little window served as an observation point for all the village movements. The interior of the kitchen

was plain, containing only the oven, or brick stove built into the end of the room, the table and chairs, and a cupboard. The stove was a curiosity to me. At first it looked crude and inconvenient, but later as I watched the old lady do her simple cooking I realized some of its advantages. Built into the wall and occupying the breadth of the room, it stood three feet high on its right and front half. In the front was the stove proper with its two movable lids where pots might be placed. The left half, two feet higher, enclosed the oven, while immediately below were two fire boxes, each for its individual use, and had its doors opening out into the room, which when opened served to heat the room.

As I followed Herr Karl out into the yard, and then into the road, I found his family of five seated in a small farm wagon. As we climbed in he mumbled something to me and to them and they nodded.

His wife was an ugly looking old woman, her teeth missing, her hair frowsy almost to the point of being matted, and when she raised her voice in anger she seemed to possess all the characteristics of an old witch. With her were three young women whom I took to be her daughters, and a small boy of about eight, her grandson.

In a moment we were jogging over the road and out into the country. A two-mile ride brought us to a wheat field. So that was to be the job, just as I had surmised—harvesting. But the way harvesting as done in America is very different from the manner in which it is done by the German peasants.

The old man hitched the horses to a mowing machine and began cutting down broad swaths of wheat. The woman raked it up, the small boy placed straw binders on which the armfuls were laid, and two of us followed behind binding them into sheaves.

The work was hard for me at first, the straw binders clumsy, or I was, and the nettles among the wheat were harsh on the hands. The amount of work I did that afternoon amounted to practically nothing, and I could not keep pace with the daughter that worked with me. In fact, she had to come back and do part of my share as well as her own. The old man explained the manner of tying sheaves, the old lady added her knowledge, and the three daughters gave valuable advice, but I proved awkward to say the least.

At four we stopped for a rest, and a bite of black bread, with beef grease and salt on it. It tasted good nevertheless. The work continued till six. We had tied and stacked all the sheaves of grain the old man had cut.

Riding back to the house that evening I was not so enthusiastic nor sure that I wanted to work on a farm. At least I decided to give it a few days' trial. I would wait and see what the work was like and how I was to be fed.

At the house a broom was placed in my hands and the horse stable pointed to. This looked like a doubtful job. Before I could begin, the old man snatched the broom from me and gave me a demonstration. Thereafter that became my evening duty.

I did not mind it as long as the horses' heels were quiet, and their heels were quiet as long as they were eating, so I insisted that they should be fed before I began to work. While I was at this work the others were busy about the yard, and by a quarter of seven supper was ready.

Supper was not to be scorned by a hungry prisoner just out from camp. Boiled potatoes and gravy containing pork followed the soup. That was all, but it was in sufficient quantity to make a generous meal.

After supper, one of the daughters and I moved a wooden bed over to the *Gasthof*, where the prisoners' sleeping quarters were. The setting up of the bed was an easy matter. Then straw was spread over the slats, a hard mattress followed, and then a soft one made from down. In place of blankets, a large but very light mattress of down, similar to the lower one, served as covering. By the time we had finished, and the girl had left, the prisoners began to return for the evening.

During the next half hour, as the prisoners filed in, one or two at a time, I became the center of attraction. In all there were eighteen; twelve Russians, three Frenchmen, two Italians, and a Belgian. Most of them had never seen an American before, so that with what little French I knew, I was kept busy answering questions as best I could. I was treated to beer and cigarettes, scarce as they were, and so I found myself a member of a rather mixed company, where my native tongue was useless.

The *Gasthof* was a beer house, and our sleeping

quarters, before the war, had been a dining room or meeting hall. At one end was a small platform, while on two sides ran a gallery. On the walls hung German mottos, which I never managed to translate, though from one or two of the words I judged they advised people to "eat, drink, and be merry." Suitable advice for such a room. Several crude oil paintings, added to the faded grotesque paper—an imitation of marble—gave the room an ancient tone, while the wooden beds arranged along the walls, and the clothes hanging above them, gave the place an appearance of a school dormitory.

The short, rotund proprietor of the place served us beer, or manufactured soda water, at twenty pfennings the glass. Having no bell to call him by, we merely stamped on the floor until we heard him puffing up the stairs.

At nine, the guard, who slept in an adjoining room, carefully locked the doors and turned out the lights. For this I was thankful, for I had answered so many questions that I had almost exhausted my vocabulary on the first night.

It was a joy to get into a real bed again and to have all my clothes off. In camp we curled up in blankets after removing our shoes and stockings, and, as one man put it, only the snobs removed more. As I figured, even my dirty clothes were cleaner than the blankets that had been used in Langensalza *Kriegsgefangenenlager* for nearly four years by the prisoners of every Allied nation. As I sank low in the down mattress my worries ceased and I drifted off to sleep.

The shuffling of the men getting into their clothes awoke me. It was just getting light. I got up, dressed, and went over to the farm. Following the guard's example, I walked in. The family were at the table having coffee, that is, coffee and bread or tarts.

My work immediately after breakfast was to cut the hay for the day. This was done by feeding a mixture of one third alfalfa and two thirds straw into a cutting machine, and at the same time furnishing the motor power by turning a large handle. The hay came out cut in two-inch lengths. This fodder was for the horses and the goats.

The day thus begun, my duties included practically every kind of work, at least every kind of unskilled work. When asked if I knew how to plow I replied in the negative and Karl never attempted to teach me. He probably judged that I was too stupid to learn.

The mid-morning meal usually consisted of a slice of bread spread with beef grease or cheese, rarely butter.

If we went into the fields to work in the morning, we always returned at noon for the noonday meal, which was ordinarily soup and bread. The meal once finished, there was no time afterwards for leisure. Work was the order of the day, and eating was considered a necessary hindrance.

The harvesting took nearly a week. Wheat, oats, and barley were cut and tied and the sheaves stacked. The only machinery used was the mower, the rest

was hand labor, done principally by the women. The eight-year-old grandson did his share also, although only light work. Once the field had been harvested, it was again gone over with a huge rake and the stray grain collected. This did not make more than two sheaves and required much tiresome labor.

The German peasant is thorough in his work, saving at every turn, regardless of the labor spent. But the old man was wont to leave most of the heavy work and the drudgery to the women, and the women, accepting the situation, worked like slaves, patiently and unceasingly, with never a word of complaint.

After the harvest was over, which took nearly a week of long tedious hours and left me worn out each night, I was given small jobs around the house or garden.

The most pleasant, and for me the most satisfactory work, was picking apples and pears. Every ripe pear or apple I ate, so that a good portion of my time I spent at the end of a tall ladder, gazing at the rolling country and munching fruit. If my work took me into the garden, apples were always near by.

The old man raised his own tobacco in a small patch in the garden. One morning, while taking some grain up to the attic of the house I spied bunches of leaves drying. I helped myself to a bunch. In comparison to the tobacco we could buy, that home-grown product of his was quite fine, but I dared not smoke it around his place for I realized he would know where it came from and stealing was a serious offense for prisoners.

None of the prisoners considered it stealing to take anything one could get away with, as they were performing forced labor for five cents a day. It was quite legitimate, so long as one were not caught red-handed, but there was practically nothing around the place that I wanted. Once in awhile I would have a raw egg, taking care to dispose of the shell. I was watched closely, or I thought I was, for some member of the family was usually in sight, especially if we were in the fields. However, I preferred to be alone for conversation was out of the question.

One evening, as I was cleaning the stable, a well-dressed elderly woman came out the back door and stood watching me. When I stood up to meet her stare, she spoke in English with scarcely a German accent.

"You are an American?" she asked.

"Yes."

"How do you like Germany?"

I tried to avoid a discussion by changing the subject to America and herself.

"Yes, my husband was an exchange professor in a university in the United States. I was visiting here when war broke out and was unable to return to America and to him."

We chatted a few minutes in a friendly manner. She had come out from Gotha for eggs. Although she did not admit it her inference was that food was very scarce in the city.

"What do you think of the war?" she demanded.

"You are German, I am American; we do not agree, so I will express no opinion," I answered.

"We did not begin the war," her very denial indicated a guilty conscience seeking justification.

"Madame," I replied, "you are a woman of education, not a peasant; your husband is a professor; you have traveled, but you cannot see this question of the war straight because you are German and your German papers tell you lies which you believe. In a few years, when the opinion of the world with its verified truths is in print, you may possibly know how I think now, and what I consider your nation to be."

Standing there on the manure pile, with a broom in hand, I made my little speech. Perhaps I had said too much! When I was given the opportunity to speak English, I let loose, as I had long since become furious on the subject of who started the war.

Her eyes flashed, and as she went into the house she picked up her skirts as if my company might contaminate her.

On the few rainy days we had, which prevented outdoor work, the women did threshing with hand flails. I was given a course of lessons, but not liking the work, I increased my clumsiness, and came so near hitting the others on the head with the stout hickory end of the flail, that they finally gave me up in disgust.

From then on the wood pile was my place on rainy days, or at times when there was nothing else to be done. No time-server ever looked at the clock oftener than I did during the day while on that farm. My watch, which I religiously kept out of sight,

counted the hours to the next meal, or to the end of the day.

The day over, I returned to the *Gasthof*. One of the Frenchmen, a young fellow from Morocco, became my greatest companion during the evenings. Strolling around the village we exchanged views and impressions, and my French improved with each day. He was always eager to hear about New York and America, and asked innumerable questions.

Did we have a peasant class in America? Was everyone rich in my country? What were the American soldiers like? And were there many in France? I tried to answer him honestly.

When I knew him better, he told me of himself and his family. He had been a prisoner for fourteen months, during which time he had been on seven farms and in three factories. He hated the boches—hated them as only a Frenchman hates, not showing his hate, but always brooding over the injustice and cruelty of the Hun. He had been in prison for punishment seven times during his captivity, all for trivial offenses.

I had arrived in the village of Eschenbergen on a Friday. The following Sunday, on which day prisoners did not work, was the first of the four that I spent there. As the guest of the Frenchmen, Italians, and Belgian, those Sundays will long be remembered for the real dinners we had. The food that was sent them was saved for Sunday, and that one meal was enough to satisfy us for the rest of the week. Boiled rice, rabbit or chicken bought from a farmer or stolen,

beans or peas, French biscuits and coffee made the meal.

The Belgian acted as cook, using the proprietor's kitchen, while a small room off the sleeping room served as a dining room. The meal was always a jolly affair. The conversation was carried on mostly in French, with a few words of Italian and German thrown in, where an explanation was necessary. These occasions carried me back to pre-prison days when I spent long evenings at a French dressing station over a game of cards and a bottle of *Pinard*. The meal being over and the few dishes washed, we all took a walk until it was dark or lingered about the steps of the *Gasthof* watching the young people who passed in.

Sunday night in the village was the one evening of the week when the people, young and old, dressed in their best clothes and came to the *Gasthof* to drink beer. We were not permitted in the bar, and, had we been, we would not have associated with the Germans. Young people, boys and girls, trooped in laughing and joking, and now and then a song rang through the evening. It was a surprise to me, being the first expression of lightheartedness I had observed. As I learned later it was the one day and evening when work was forgotten.

As everywhere, there were no young men in the village, although the girls were numerous, as were the children. They and the old people, together with a few prisoners, were doing the farm work, keeping production up to normal and furnishing their share of food for the army.

Unlike our American farms and our farming districts, the German villages were compact, one house built against its neighbor, with no yard between and no front yard. Each house with its barns, as I have mentioned before, was so arranged that it could be locked at night, leaving nothing exposed to thievery. Every farm was suspicious of its neighbors. All the houses being in the village, the fields were necessarily in the outlying district.

Herr Karl's land lay in five different fields, none of them adjoining. He was quite well off for a peasant, as was shown by the number of cattle and acres he possessed, probably about two hundred acres in all. Some inhabitants in the village had only an acre or two which furnished a bare existence.

During my second week the young Frenchman was sent to another farm as a result of a quarrel with his *chef*. Not until he had left did I realize what a companion he had been. That evening I made up my mind I had had enough of Eschenbergen and the *Gasthof*, with its mixture of nationalities. From what I had learned from the other men, I knew that the quickest and easiest way to leave was to make my work so unsatisfactory that I would be either sent back or given another place. So I began to loaf on the job, to work carelessly and slowly. When chopping wood I sat down, taking my time over each stick. Herr Karl remonstrated with me, but I did it my own way in the end.

On September 12th, my first Red Cross box arrived. Words cannot express the joy that I experienced as I

unpacked the contents. Canned food, consisting of beans, peas, corn, salmon, corned beef, corned-beef hash, jam, coffee, milk, sugar, dried figs, a bar of soap, and six pounds of American hard-tack. About thirty pounds in all. And last, but not least, five sacks of precious Bull Durham. It was my chance to return the hospitality of a Sunday dinner, so I let the Belgian help himself to the box. That night I felt that my country had not forgotten me. In the succeeding days the boxes of food had as great a moral effect on my spirits as did the food on my physical condition. From that time on hunger was a thing of the past and I began to live better than my German keepers.

The following week my first mail arrived, a letter from Mother, forwarded from Paris, and a letter from an American woman in France. With the realization that events were progressing satisfactorily with the Allies, and with the knowledge that all was well at home, the immediate future could be borne with a more cheerful heart. Those letters came like voices out of the dark, and their torn condition marked my appreciation as they were read and re-read.

The evening after my mail arrived the guard announced that I was to leave at six the following morning. Upon being questioned he told us I was going to a neighboring village to work for a Frau. So I had done my last work for Herr Karl. I was not disappointed. The work had been hard. During the harvest I had put as many as twelve wagonloads of grain in the barn each day, lifting the sheaves into

the loft on the end of a twelve-foot fork, and there was the threshing still to be done. I was indeed glad that I was not to be returned to camp. Plenty of exercise, a comfortable bed, and good food were not to be scorned. Langensalza camp was better than Laon, and a farm better than either.

After our Sunday night supper in the little room adjoining our sleeping quarters, I slipped over to my *chef's* house for the few toilet articles I had left there. No one was in the house so I never saw them again. A farewell was unnecessary. If his remembrance of me is as unpleasant as mine is of his establishment, he must have had no regret at my going.

In my three weeks there I had received no word of cheer, not a pfenning of pay, and seldom a smile. The mornings began with a gruff *morgen*, and when I left at night, it was with a feeling that they begrudged me the hour or two before sundown. I was glad to try my luck elsewhere.

CHAPTER VI

ILLEBEN

MONDAY morning, September 23d, I said good-bye to my *camarades*, Russian, Italian, French, and the Belgian, swung my luggage to my shoulder, and followed my guard down the stairs and out of the village. We took the same road by which we had come three weeks before. After a few minutes' wait at the station, we boarded the train going in the direction of Langensalza. As the train tumbled on, I thought possibly the guard was lying about my going to another farm, but half an hour's ride brought us to Eckartslaben, a few miles this side of Langensalza.

A woman stepped forward and spoke to the guard and he pointed to me. She looked me over with an appraising eye and after a moment emitted a number of "*Ja's*," thus showing her approval. With a "*komm!*" thrown over her shoulder, she started off. My guide remounted the coach.

Eckartslaben was not my destination. Chatting with some friends, the Frau led the way to the next village, by name Illeben, which lay almost hidden among the trees and rolling hills.

My first impression of the Frau was good, to say

the least. She was a woman of about thirty-five, neatly dressed in a fashion not suggestive of a farmer's wife. Her face, though not kindly, was pleasant and her manner authoritative. Taking things as they came, I immediately decided my change had been for the better.

At a fork in the road her companions left her and she turned her attention to me. With what little German I had picked up in the past weeks, we managed to carry on a conversation, which, freely translated, ran in this order:

"Are you a farmer by trade?" she questioned.

"No."

"Can you plow?"

"No."

"Oh, well! You'll learn how here."

I assented that I might.

"Why did you leave the other place?" I shrugged my shoulders for answer.

"Did they not feed you well?"

"No!" I said, in the hope it might influence her to serve a better meal.

We entered the village, which during the next two months was to become so familiar. As we walked down the winding street, I heard the little windows squeak open, and out of the corner of my eye, I could catch the sight of curious old women poking their heads out to see who was going by. Quite unconscious of the fact that I was creating comment, I looked around me with the innocence of a farmer visiting New York City for the first time.

Her house stood in the center of the village at the right angle turn of the main street, so that it was situated on what might have been called the village square had there been one. A creek ran through the village and near the house. On its banks geese waddled in the mud and called noisily.

As we entered the door, I noticed painted in large letters across the front of the house *Zur Tanne.* The question which rose in my mind was answered as soon as I crossed the doorstep and caught a glimpse of the bar. I had gotten into another beer house. Did the woman believe for a minute I was a bartender?

After leading me upstairs to a small room over the hall and with a window looking out over the street we returned to the bar, where she drew me a glass of beer. That and a huge slice of bread with Dutch cheese was my *frühstück.* As I ate my breakfast, I looked around me. The bar was small, and took up half the width of the room, being on the right side of the door that led to the hall. Two tables with chairs stood on the street side of the room, while on the other was one table with an oil-cloth cover, and a small coal stove and a couch. On the walls were prints of the Kaiser and his family, a notice urging subscription to the submarine war campaign, and a calendar. The three windows looking out on the street were curtained. The whole room bore an atmosphere of business mingled with home life.

By the time I had finished, Frau Hess returned. A decided change in her appearance met my eye.

She had donned her working clothes. An old handkerchief was bound over her head, a rough dirty skirt replaced her neat dress, and her sleeves were rolled up.

"*Komm!*" she ordered, not unkindly, when she saw I had finished. I followed her to the back door at the end of the narrow hall. Her back yard was similar to the one at Eschenbergen, though very much smaller. The high manure pile lay at the doorstep, and took up a good part of the yard. Behind it stood a wagon loaded with hay. To this she pointed, at the same time handing me a pitchfork. She disappeared up the stairs of the barn and in a moment swung open the loft door. I fell to work pitching the hay up to her.

That finished, we wheeled the wagon out into a side street beside the brook. When she opened the stable door I expected to see horses, but in the semi-dark stall stood two sleepy looking cows and a young heifer.

Harness in hand she gave me my first lesson in hitching up the two cows. It was a simple matter. The tugs were fastened to a headgear, one rein served the purpose of two and with our legs dangling from the board seat and the cows taking their time, we started for the fields. As we passed through the village I noticed that Illeben was much smaller than Eschenbergen and not so prosperous looking or clean. It took us fully half an hour to reach the Frau's potato field.

I had dug potatoes before, at Eschenbergen, so

that the job was not a new one. One sack of potatoes and a few cow beets was the result of what little we did that morning.

When Frau Hess gave me instructions that evening in feeding the cows, I saw that I was to have a freer hand in the work than on the last farm. This pleased me, for the work would be less monotonous. Frau Hess probably knew nothing of the psychology of interesting an employee, yet by giving me an active part in all phases of the farm work, she created an interest in the work and I did more than I would have otherwise.

During supper that evening I was pleased to learn that there were two Englishmen in the village. This was an added attraction to my new place. Now there would be company during the evenings.

I had just settled down at one of the tables in the barroom—we also had all our meals there—it being the general living room of the small household, when in walked the two Englishmen. An introduction was unnecessary; we shook hands cordially and sat down.

As in the former village, I was the first American to arrive, and the news that I gave my newly made companions was the first authentic information of the war they had received in months, as they had not been in Langensalza for some time. The evening passed all too quickly. I was more than glad to be able to bear good tidings, not to mention the pleasure of being with Englishmen again.

The older of the two men, John Campbell, a Scotchman from Natal, South Africa, had been a

prisoner for over two years, most of the time being spent on the farm on which he was now working. Campbell was past middle age, slight in stature and quiet in manner. Like the true Britisher that he was, he had answered England's call in the early part of the war, had gone into training and then to the front, where he was wounded and captured. As he told me: "I was on duty as an outpost alone, supposing at the time reinforcements were behind. When the boches came over I plugged away at them till they got me. Not till the Hun line passed over me did I recover consciousness and find that I was only slightly wounded." The deep lines in his face told of his suffering more plainly than he put into words.

Harry A. Turner, of Melbourne, Australia, was the other Britisher—a dark-haired, dark-eyed, forceful man in the prime of life. He also had been a prisoner for over two years and had served on the farm most of the time with Campbell. The exact details of the capture of these men, when and where they were taken and to what regiment they belonged, I am unable to state, as my notes made at the time were lost. But their picture as they walked into the room that evening will never be lost. Their neat black uniforms issued by the British relief committee, were set off by polished buttons. Their short and snappy salute brought back to me a picture of English troops on their way to the lines, in full equipment, stepping forward with as much energy and order as if on parade. I was proud to know two such soldiers.

Frau Hess entered into our conversation considerably that evening, one of the Englishmen acting as interpreter. Her greatest interest was in me, while that of the Englishmen was in the war.

One of the Frenchmen at Eschenbergen was receiving almost daily a copy of the *Petite Parisienne*, for which his *chef* had subscribed for him. The night before I had left I had read the latest of these, so that I knew of the advance on Metz and of the later activities along the front. That first evening was far too short. For more than a week I was answering questions both from the Englishmen and the Frau.

The men left about nine, as their *chef* locked up about that hour. I turned in shortly afterwards. As I lay in bed reflecting on the day's developments, I congratulated myself on being so happily situated. Frau Hess had never had a prisoner before, yet she managed during the four years of the war to run her small farm of twenty-five acres with the aid of her niece and her neighbors. Why she wanted one now, the Englishmen, as well as her friends, could not understand, and I never learned just why. At least she and her place were an improvement on my former position. I rolled over and went to sleep, pleased with the present prospects.

The window of my little room had stood open during the warm weather. When it began to get cold Frau Hess told me to keep it closed, particularly at night, lest the night air should make me sick. In answer I explained that we never slept with closed

windows in America, even in the winter. But it did no good. According to her notion of hygiene, I would kill myself. A few days later the Frau calked the cracks around the door of my room, telling me to keep the cold air to myself. She and her son, I noticed, slept in her room with all the windows and the door closed.

A rapping on my door the next morning about six o'clock told me that it was time to get up. I dressed after a good night's sleep and went downstairs.

The first job in hand was to feed the cows and clean out the stall. That took only about half an hour and was followed by coffee drinking or breakfast, which consisted of coffee and bread. Thus the day began.

In the few weeks that followed, the potatoes had to be gotten in, the cow beets pulled up, their tops cut off and the beets themselves stored in the cellar. I was thankful that I had not another crop of grain to harvest like that at Eschenbergen.

Digging two acres of potatoes was bad enough, for it was all handwork and tiresome. Fraulein Paula, the Frau's niece, and the Frau herself worked with me, and at times only the Fraulein and I worked together. The ratio between the work we accomplished—that is, when the niece and I were working alone—and the German I learned during our conversation, was about equal.

Paula was only eighteen, a buxom young lass of the German type, though not of the usual German fairness. We would work busily for a few minutes, then she would sit back on her heels and ask questions

about America or the war. My answers were always more or less exaggerated, both in regard to the success of the Allied armies and concerning the beauty and wealth of America.

At three or four in the afternoon the Frau would come out in the wagon, cow drawn, with a milk can of hot coffee and some cake. The cake was nearer our brown bread in flavor than real cake, but it was acceptable and the short rest prepared us for the remainder of the day's work. Then we would all fall to work until the potatoes were in sacks. The wagon was then brought up, the Frau and Fraulein loading them into the wagon, while I, at their direction, stood in the wagon and arranged them. The load being complete, we drove back to the house. Paula walked back across country to start supper. The Frau rode on top of the potatoes, and I tramped alongside, tending the cows and the little screw brake on the side of the wagon when we came to the long hill dropping down into the village.

By half past six my chores were over and the day's work finished. At the washbasin in the kitchen I cleaned up and then retired to the bar. The Englishmen had lent me a few books and with these I settled down until supper.

Our suppers usually consisted of boiled potatoes, flaxseed oil, and salt, or at times it was only tea and bread and butter, and on one or two occasions, chocolate and bread, the chocolate having been sent from the front by the Frau's husband, who was an *unteroffizier* in artillery. It surprised me that the Frau

would serve a prisoner with chocolate, as that article was very scarce and in the villages sold as high as fifty marks a pound. Its value as compared to sugar is illustrated by the fact that Turner traded a quarter of a pound of cocoa to a woman for three and a half pounds of sugar. However, the woman's husband was in charge of the distribution of sugar in the village, and at the time of the trade asked Turner to say nothing of the exchange.

During my first evenings there, Frau Hess demanded to know all about me and my position in civil life. Turner and Campbell acted as interpreters so that she managed to understand.

"What did you do in America?" the Frau asked.

"Nothing," I answered.

"Nothing?" The Frau looked at me as if I were crazy.

"Nothing."

"What does your father do?" she demanded.

"Nothing."

The Frau was amazed. When I told Turner he was a lawyer, he remarked: "Well, I don't know the German for that, so I'll tell her he is an official of a State; we'll make him a governor, how's that?" So Turner explained at great length my father's mythical position. As the Frau grasped the meaning of it all, a light came into her eyes as she exclaimed:

"*Ach! du bist ein Kapitalist!*"

"*Ja! Ja!*" I lied. That started things. From then on I was a marked man. The Frau quizzed me herself and then boasted to the whole village of her

prisoner, so that I was an object of curiosity. The village was so small that gossip was the chief topic of conversation, and everybody knew everybody else's affairs.

Often in the fields the Frau and I would be working together, when she would stop and lean on her pitchfork.

"Women in America don't work, you say?" She would sigh.

"Oh, no! Not as they do here in Germany," was my answer.

"*Ach, Gott in Himmel!* and look at us poor creatures." Perhaps I was sowing seeds of discontent in the village, or perhaps only telling her how the other half of the world lived. At least I jarred her out of her German complacency and gave her food for thought.

But American life was not what I wanted to talk of most. By telling of the American army, and its great numbers, I figured I might do a little propaganda work on my own part to make the peasants in the village realize that America was not bluffing and thus, perchance, weaken the morale of the sons and fathers at the front. Whatever I could say would have only a very little effect, if any at all, yet it might help. So, when asked concerning the Americans, my reply was:

"Three million Americans at the front, five million awaiting transportation to France, and fifteen million are in training."

To which Frau Hess exclaimed:

"*Ach, Gott in Himmel!*" and raised her arms in distress.

At other times she would laugh at me and explain that we had no ships, that the submarines were sinking them all.

"Oh, no!" I would answer; "for instance, the *Vaterland*, which your papers reported as sunk, is bringing ten thousand troops, fine American soldiers, every trip. Figure it out yourself."

The potatoes dug during the previous afternoon had to be stored in the cellar the next morning. The first few loads were put in a bin at the far end of the cellar for immediate use. The place being dark and cool they would keep all winter. The last fifty sacks were piled up in the corner of another part of the cellar, a part that I knew was used as the cow beet bin. The potatoes finished, we began work on the beets. It took nearly a week to finish these.

One morning the Frau led me down cellar. After a long explanation on her part I understood that she wanted me to build a wall of beets in such a way as to hide the potatoes. I then realized why she had left the last fifty sacks of potatoes in the bin. It was a simple case of food hoarding.

By the light of a candle I built the wall. It was not hard work, but very exacting. If one beet became loose the wall caved in and I had to begin over again. When it was finally finished, after two days, I called the Frau.

"Just as well as my husband could have done!" was her comment. I didn't know whether she con-

sidered that a compliment or an insult. Maybe I was learning a little about farming, but I most certainly did not relish the idea of being in a class with her boche husband.

As I had sold my razor in camp, I went to the barber while in Eschenbergen, every Sunday morning. He shaved me for fifty pfennings. The Englishmen came to my rescue at Illeben, where there was no barber, by giving me a razor. But that did not cut my hair, and it was growing rapidly. Turner offered to cut it, but I declined with thanks. Campbell offered his services, which I also refused. Frau Hess finally got a barber. A chair was placed in the back yard and the Frau, arms akimbo, stood back to watch the proceedings. As the German was about to begin, I realized he was going to make a clean shave of the affair with the use of clippers. I rose:

"You are not going to cut it all off?" I asked.

"*Ja!*"

I objected. I was not ashamed of the shape of my head, but I was not going to lose all of my hair. The Frau seemed somewhat disappointed, but there was no hair-cutting that morning.

Sunday was a day of rest for the prisoners, and Frau Hess did no work on that day. However, I consented to feed the cattle on Sunday—that was the extent of my work.

After breakfast I went over to the Umbriet place, where Turner and Campbell worked. They occupied a small room in the barn, built over the stable. Their first night on the place Herr Umbriet had

locked the door at the bottom of the stairs that led to their room. The Englishmen kicked it down. After that was repeated on several occasions, the crabby old farmer learned to leave the door unlocked.

The old man was not only crabby, but crazy—*verückt*, his neighbors and family called him. He was close, stingy, and industrious, lording it over his family, servants, and neighbors. No one in the village liked him, although he was one of the wealthiest men there, having married money, as it were, his farm being really owned by his wife and stepdaughter.

When Turner and Campbell went on the place, they resolved to make the German understand that they were English; that the English were an entirely different race from the Huns, being gentlemen at all times. Such an attitude was hard to take, let alone to maintain in the face of peasant ignorance, lack of manners and morality, and the ever-present German pigheadedness.

From the beginning they refused to eat at the same table with the family. That was a point I had not thought of, and it was too late to change. In my case, however, I was in a more kindly disposed household. The result of their stand was that they had a table in the kitchen by themselves, and that they lived better than the family for whom they worked, for together with the German food they had their own food parcels sent from England. In many instances the Frau would cut down on the food given them, thinking they had plenty of their own, then Turner would fly into a rage, imitating the German method of

argument, and food would sometimes be forthcoming and sometimes not!

Often I would go over in the evening before they had finished supper and sit in the kitchen visiting. One evening I found Turner in jolly mood, and this was the cause. The family had guests for supper. The meal served that night was mainly boiled potatoes. When the Englishmen sat down to their supper and began peeling their potatoes, they found them frozen and unfit to eat. Turner saw his chance. No one was in the kitchen. Hastily he exchanged the bad potatoes for the good ones in the family dish and he and Campbell continued supper. Undoubtedly the Frau had intentionally served them with the bad ones, but she made no comment, although Frieda, the little house servant, was unable to suppress her merriment when she came from the dining room.

Frieda was a sketch. "A typical little English barmaid," Turner used to say. Small and active, she slaved for her mark a day from five in the morning until late at night. I often watched her as she worked in the kitchen in the evening, and she watched us too! I honestly believe she understood more of our conversations than we gave her credit for, at least she had a good opportunity for picking up English.

Another prisoner, Bert Gilbert, of London, joined our group shortly after my arrival at Illeben. Gilbert had enlisted at the outbreak of the war for a period of seven years. He was then only nineteen. During the first week of fighting, during the retreat

from Mons, he had been captured. Having been a prisoner for four years, his experience, or what little of it he would tell, is typical of the sufferings of prisoners taken in the early part of the war.

"Why, boy!" he often said to me when I was complaining of something, "you don't know when you're well off. You have suffered nothing compared with others around you. The Germans you are living among are a very docile race compared to those back in '14." He was right!

Gilbert was wounded and neglected, but a skillful operation at the last moment had saved his life. Before he had been sent to the rear, he had seen one of his regiment crucified alive with bayonets at Mons. His first rations in a prison camp had been one dried herring a day, the bones of which were saved and traded with the Russian prisoners for cigarettes. For punishment he had stood for five hours at attention, barefooted in the snow, his hands tied to a post behind him. On his back he bore marks of a cat-o'-nine-tails, received while working in a salt mine. He had been in most of the camps in Germany; had done all kinds of work; had attempted to escape over and over again, only to be caught, sent back, and punished. But all this had not broken his zeal.

When he came out to us, he immediately became the life of the party—if a nightly gathering of prisoners in the heart of Germany can be called a party—and his wit and humor during an evening were worth the day's work.

Many were the hours that we four spent up in

Turner's and Campbell's room exchanging views, discussing the war, and cursing out the Germans. Practically from the four corners of the globe: London, South Africa, Australia, and Arizona, we were each able to contribute stories of our own countries that not only brought a laugh, but were heard by the others only to be credited as fiction. From those long visits I felt that I had learned enough to find my way around London, or to converse with a native Hottentot of Africa, or to start homesteading on the plains of Australia.

The relative assistance rendered by the various Allied nations brought forth a world of discussion, and when we had finished, we were no further than in the beginning. The Englishmen joked me about the American conceit, and the foolishness of thinking America would alone win the war. Yet they all conceded that the outcome would have been uncertain and probably tragically deferred, had we not entered.

Sunday was our real recreation day. After Sunday dinner the four of us would go over to a neighboring village to visit two Englishmen who worked there, or else Paine and Moss would come over to Illeben. Wherever we went, tea was served the guests. On the occasions that Paine and Moss acted as hosts, we met on the top of a hill just outside of the village, exchanged greetings, and continued on together. Gilbert always suggested stopping at the beer house for a couple of drinks before tea. The couple of drinks, however, were merely beer and that of a poor quality, as hops and other usual ingredients were forbidden

during the war. Tea followed, real English tea, with cream and sugar, crackers, jam, and butter. The anticipation of packages, the latest war news gathered from the papers and rumors, and even the village scandal, were discussed. But each weekly meeting broke up all too early in the afternoon, for we were required to return to feed the cows!

On the few occasions that Paine and Moss came to Illeben, either Turner and Campbell acted as hosts, or I did. Not having a large room of my own, the bar became our meeting place and Frau Hess, without comment, boiled the coffee for us but I could see the idea displeased her. What few little favors the Frau granted me were well worth her while, for she was the only woman in Illeben who had real coffee twice a day.

At this time my food parcels were coming from the Red Cross regularly every ten days. As I could not boil the coffee myself, I turned it over to the Frau and she prepared and served it. She was able to make a pound of coffee last ten days, much to my surprise. The rest of the food I did not share with her, even though we ate at the same table. At first this was embarrassing, but I realized that I was under no obligation to her; that she was my enemy and the enemy of my country and that the packages were sent by the Red Cross to sustain my life as a prisoner of war and not to aid the Germans against whom a blockade was being maintained. As I opened a can of corned beef, she would look wistfully at it, but I simply divided it and put half away for the next meal.

"Taste good?" she would ask.

"*Ja! Ja!*" was my answer, as I began eating without offering her any.

By careful use the thirty pounds lasted the allotted ten days. On several occasions I was able to help out the Englishmen when their food was delayed, and they in turn frequently helped me.

On two rainy days during the first week in October, we did some threshing. The Frau had not enough grain to require the use of an electrical thresher, so it became necessary to use a small hand affair. The baker, a neighbor, and I furnished the motor power, while his wife, another woman, and the Frau fed the machine, bundled the straw, and raked off the chaff. For twenty minutes at a time we would turn the crank and then rest five minutes. During one of our rest periods, I heard the first openly expressed doubt on the part of the peasant, that Germany was not going to win the war.

The baker looked at me and asked:

"Germany is defeated?"

"*Ja!*" I answered, and then came the chorus of "*Ja! Ja!*" from the women.

From then on neither the Frau nor her neighbors tried to put up any bluff concerning Germany's situation. They openly discussed affairs before me, but unless directly addressed, I did not enter into the conversations.

Fresh meat was seldom served, but one morning the Frau announced that she was going to kill a goat. The butcher's son, a boy of sixteen, did the killing

and dressing. That was practically the first fresh meat I had seen served in Germany, and then the Frau only served it on Sundays and Wednesdays.

The next meat that we had was a month later, from one of the pigs, killed in November, after the weather had begun to be cold. The work of killing him and making the meat into sausages took practically the whole day. The sausage and the sides of bacon were delicious the few times the Frau served it. The sausage was packed in glass jars with a layer of lard over the sausage. The whole process of killing, preparing, and curing the pork was interesting, especially as nothing was wasted.

The German farmer is very economical in all things. All straw is saved and used for bedding the animals, thus increasing the manure pile. The manure is so placed that a cistern is built beneath and all water saved. This water is in turn pumped into huge barrels and sprinkled on the fields. The tops of beets are spread over the beet field and turned under during the plowing. The old potato vines are saved and used for cattle bedding. Crops are rotated so that no field produces the same grain or vegetables two years in succession.

Many of the farmers instead of storing their beets in a cellar, dig pits about two feet deep, in which the beets are heaped, making piles that rose four and five feet above the surface of the ground. Over these piles is placed straw or potato vines, and then a layer of earth. Stored in this manner the beets neither rotted nor froze.

Herr Umbriet, for whom Turner worked, had a beet pit eighty paces long. In his avariciousness the old farmer had planted thirty acres of beets, planning to sell them to the government for five marks the hundredweight. Beets fell in price to a mark fifty the hundredweight by harvest time and his neighbors had the laugh on him and he had the beets on his hands.

Peasant life in the village was very dull and commonplace, although quite different in many respects from life in an American farming district. The German never dreamed of shortening his hours of labor, nor did he waste any time on pleasure. Work, prompted by the motive of money, *shön Geld* as they expressed it, rubbing their thumbs and forefingers together, was their sole ambition; and work they did, steadily, patiently, and untiringly. Even the soldiers returning on leave immediately went to work in the fields, as a matter of course.

Fridays and Saturdays were baking days. The peasants made their own loaves, huge ones about two feet long, and then took them to the baker to be baked. As each loaf bore the owner's initials, there was never a mixup. The baker's shop, or house and shop combined, was across the street from Frau Hess's. Early on Friday mornings I would be awakened by the tinkle of the bell on the shop door as the peasants carried in their bread. The tarts, which I first tasted at Eschenbergen, were also baked there. These tarts, although only about half an inch thick and usually covered with sliced apples or plums,

measured fully three feet in diameter. It was a common sight to see girls taking them to the baker's balanced on their heads, while under each arm was carried a loaf of bread.

The distrust that the peasants showed for one another was amazing and well founded. Every night they locked their doors with as much care as if they were living in a large city. Implements left in the fields over night were stripped of all detachable parts. One evening I left a plow scraper near the plow, and the next morning it was missing. Small articles, such as pitchforks or spades, if left even during the noon hour, had to be camouflaged.

Nearly every evening, about seven o'clock, the town crier passed down the street, ringing his bell and announcing food prices or other items of interest. An unnecessary proceeding, it seemed to me, for Illeben, being within two miles of the railroad, was easily reached by the papers. Frau Hess, although I believe she was an exception to the rule, took three daily papers; those of Langensalza, Gotha, and Erfurt.

At first these papers held no interest for me, being printed in German script. When I finally obtained a dictionary, I was able to read the headlines and the communiques. But even those had to be taken with a grain of salt. One item which always amused me was the naval report of tonnage sunk by the submarines. This ranged from thirty thousand to fifty thousand tons a day!

Another page that always caught my eye was the one which contained death notices in the form

of large advertisements, published by the friends of those killed in action.

The town crier had a rival in the village night watchman. This official began his rounds at ten, ringing a bell also, and calling out: "All is well." At ten, eleven, twelve, and one o'clock he made his rounds, going through the same performance. Usually I heard him make his first round, then no more, although frequently the last round would awaken me from a sound sleep. Just what good that watchman did was a puzzle to me as the village streets were lighted by electricity, although the lights were turned off at ten.

Government authority rests with a heavy hand on the peasants. A certain percentage of the produce from the fields had to be given to the military and a farmer was taxed in accordance with his acreage. Sufficient was allowed the people upon which to live and plenty for the cattle and spring planting; the rest went to the army or to the city.

Food hoarding was the common practice in the village. Every animal—cow, pig, goose, or goat—was registered and had to be accounted for to the burgomaster. Yet these rules were evaded. One old farmer killed two pigs in one week; the first one was permitted by law, but in place of weighing it, he weighed a small one and reported its weight and killed a large one; the second pig was killed on the sly at night, and the burgomaster not only received a quarter of the pig for his silence, but he helped in the killing. Gilbert also was a party to the slaughter.

Frau Hess reported that three of her geese were stolen, while, as a matter of fact, she sold them, boasting to me that she had received two hundred and ninety-five marks for them—an equivalent of about fifty dollars.

Gilbert's *chef*, a wise old man, realized that Germany would be defeated and that the paper money in circulation would then decrease in value, so, to avoid a loss, he bought as much livestock as possible, thus getting value received for his money before the depreciation. On one occasion he bought a colt, paying as much as seven thousand marks for it.

Sugar was allowed only to the peasants who raised flax and then only a small amount per person. Frau Hess received a sugar ration for me, which, of course, I never even saw.

Under these conditions, it was no wonder that the peasants were anxious for the war to end and their husbands to return home. With each week their criticism became more open and their distrust in the success of their army increased.

One evening I was sitting in the bar with the Englishmen. Several old men were at a table visiting over their beer with the Frau. Rudolph, her son, suddenly burst into the room singing *Deutschland über Alles* in his childish voice. As his mother stopped him, one of the old men remarked: "Yes, and Germany will have no allies shortly!" The same old man, a few days after the armistice, commented: "For God, for Kaiser, and for Fatherland! We don't know if there is a God, and the Kaiser has

run off to Holland, and I think it is rather hopeless trying to do anything for the Fatherland."

In October I began plowing. The baker acted as my instructor for the first lesson and then the Frau took me in hand. Plowing with cows is quite a different matter from using horses. They would plod along, taking their time, stopping now and then to look back in the hope that I had forgotten them and only moving when the long whip wound around their legs. As the afternoon drew to a close, they objected more and more to work, refusing to obey any verbal commands. With only one rein it was impossible to make them follow the furrow once they had decided to do otherwise. My only other choice was to unhitch them and let them go home. The plowing of twenty-five acres took nearly two weeks. Those two cows led a miserable existence. When I had taken them back after a day in the fields, the Frau milked them. If the cows did not give enough milk, the woman would fly into a rage and beat them with a long club. Like beaten curs they would cringe into a corner of the cowshed, so that it was apparent her cruelty was a habit.

If it were possible to enjoy life at all, under the circumstances, I certainly enjoyed those weeks in the open left to my own thoughts and the memory of better days.

Often I would pass Turner as I returned from the fields. My appearance afforded him many a good laugh as I sat on the side of the old farm wagon, yelling commands to the cows. One look in the mirror

would explain his mirth. My hair was over my ears and so long that my fatigue cap would barely stay on the back of my head. The old suit that Turner had given me bore the traces of two years' wear, while the red bandana handkerchief around my neck added to my picturesque appearance. My trousers were tucked into a pair of German army boots, size eleven, which were out of all proportion. Those boots were useless. A huge hole in the toe admitted quantities of dirt, and the two pieces of cloth—a German issue for socks—were worse than nothing at all. I might as well have been barefooted. When my shoes had worn out, the Frau had written into camp for another pair, sending in the old ones as was required. But the new ones never arrived, or at least I never saw them. My suspicions were that they were received, but the Frau kept them for her husband.

I was sadly in need of clothes. The first Red Cross box forwarded to me from Nuremberg, where I was reported to have been sent, and which did not reach me till October in Illeben, contained a shirt, a suit of woolen underwear, some socks, and a few toilet articles. Those insured a weekly change and kept me warm as the autumn advanced. Had not Turner and Campbell, as I have said, furnished me with an extra suit for working, and an old pair of shoes, I would have been in a sad condition.

A German woman commented to Gilbert on the slovenly condition of the American, meaning me. When he replied that I had nothing more than what I wore when captured, that the German government

gave nothing to the prisoners, she apologized for her remark, saying that she did not know that.

Our clothes may not have been up to the military standard, but our conduct in the village, our tales of our home countries, concerning both our democracy and prosperity, gave the peasants the impression that England and America were countries which demanded their consideration.

Frau Hess, shortly after my arrival, expressed her thoughts concisely when she remarked: "*Ach!* America is a land of swine and manure!" Yet the day after the armistice, she referred to America as "the Great Sister Republic!"

Frau Hess was a good German peasant. She obeyed the mandates of her state and believed all that appeared in the papers. I say that she was a good German peasant: she was, according to the German standards. There her goodness ended. What kindness she showed me was merely a matter of policy—that I understood clearly—and I was on my guard not to permit her to get the upper hand or to place myself in any way under obligation to her, lest she take advantage of the situation. At first she offered to pay me twenty marks a month, which I refused, asking only the seven that she was required to pay. At the same time she would steal my soap and ask me for Red Cross food. In place of accusing her of stealing the soap, which I knew she would deny, I told Gilbert and he told a servant in the household for which he worked, so that the story came back to her from other sources in the village.

Her attitude was not submissive by any means, yet in a way she catered to me. On one occasion her niece lost her temper and began heaping harmless German curses on my head. In the midst of the row, the Frau walked into the room and demanded an explanation. To my great surprise she made the girl apologize. Later, the Frau stated to me that a girl should never swear. Whether that was the cause or not, Paula soon left the place.

One misty morning, late in October, in place of the usual work, the Frau told me to clean up, that we were going to take the flax to a mill in a distant village. I shaved and got into my old khaki uniform.

The trip was a change and a bit of a holiday for me. Each of us carried to the station on our shoulders a fifty-pound sack of flaxseed, she placing hers in a basket which was strapped to her. That was the manner in which all peasant women carried their bundles and their vegetables to the market. I should judge that many carried as much as a hundred pounds.

On the train from Eckartslaben to Gotha, where we changed trains, I had a long chat with a Frenchman who was on his way to a new *Kommando*. He gave me what little news there was from the camp at Langensalza. While waiting in the station at Gotha a German came up to me.

"You are English?" he asked in broken English.

"No, American," I answered.

"So? Well, you will be going home in a few months—the war will not last much longer now."

"Why do you think that?" I asked.

"Oh! I know it, Germany is beaten. We have no food—we cannot continue the war without food. When it is over I am going to England or to America," he said.

"Are you? Well, England has passed a law forbidding Germans to enter the country, and the Americans will probably do the same, for they will not soon forget what the Germans have done in the war," I replied.

"Well, we will see." He shrugged his shoulders and walked away.

At Lambach, our destination, we went immediately to the mill. The miller's wife asked the Frau to have coffee with her. It was in the early afternoon. As for me, she was in doubt, but she finally included me in the invitation. The next half hour I would not have missed for considerable. I, a prisoner, sitting there in a prim little German sitting room, balancing a teacup, while I kept out of the conversation as much as possible, answering in my broken German only when spoken to, was amusing to say the least.

With a jug of flaxseed oil, we started home—that is, back to Illeben—in the early afternoon. Every time we changed coaches, going and coming, and we changed twice both ways, the talk among the passengers eventually turned to me, and the Frau took great delight in relating my history, repeating all I had told her of the war and America. She told her story six times that day, and each time I was looked over by the whole car as if I were a new breed of animal, in place of a common *Gefangener*. Pretending that I

understood nothing, I looked out of the window. Only once did I join in the conversation and that was when a young girl said that America was a good country for her brother was living there, but that she feared he might have been thrown into prison as she had not heard from him since the war began.

"Where does your brother live?" I asked.

"In Akron, Ohio," she answered. I then told her that there was no need to worry over him, that as long as he behaved himself he would not get into trouble.

During the last part of our journey a German sailor, a huge fellow, wearing several decorations, harangued the peasants in the car. From the few words that I could understand, it was plain that he was talking sedition, urging a revolt, if necessary. With his broad hands he gesticulated and his deep powerful voice held the attention of the passengers. From what he said I gathered all was not well with the German navy, and the men realized it. As events developed later, this sailor was but one of the many participating in the revolt at Kiel.

November began my sixth month as a prisoner. The weather was getting raw and the cold bit my fingers as I worked in the fields or in the garden. I had finished planting the early grain, but there still remained more plowing. The Frau had been urging me to finish that before the ground became frozen and snow set in. Rumors of Allied victories, German retreats, and a general advance of our lines, had been numerous. The peasants talked more openly of a

probable German defeat. A shepherd, one afternoon during that first week in November, told me that the war would be over in a month. At the time I laughed at him, firmly believing that two or three months would pass before the Kaiser would surrender. I did not for a minute think that the Kaiser would abdicate.

The evening of November 10th, I retired early. Long after midnight visitors lingered in the bar and I could hear their voices raised in discussion. Little did I realize that a rumor had reached the village of the news I was to hear the next morning five hours before the signing of the armistice.

When I sat down to coffee the next morning, the Frau told me what we had been waiting so long to hear.

"The war is finished!" she exclaimed, "and my man will soon be coming home." I could hardly believe my ears. In answer to my question, she continued: "*Ja!* The Kaiser has abdicated. King George of England has abdicated and President Poincaré and President Wilson have both been assassinated."

"That is a lie!" I answered, believing nothing that she had told me. Not until the Langensalza paper arrived, did I fully realize that she had spoken the truth in part.

"The war is over!" that one sentence rang in my ears all the day like some song I had only dreamed of hearing. The actuality was too good to comprehend. The long looked for, the long hoped for, the long prayed for end had finally come. No soldier in the

trenches and no home in the rear received that news with greater thanksgiving than did the Allied prisoners in Germany.

When I met the Englishmen that evening, each of us could hardly contain our ecstacy, as we rejoiced triumphantly.

"Didn't I tell you that it was coming, boy? But it came sooner than any of us expected," laughed Gilbert.

The next evening an English-speaking German sergeant came from camp, principally to get food from the farmers, and incidentally to tell us that he would keep us informed as to the departure of prisoners.

"I will let you know in time and take you back to camp, so you will leave with the first convoy. And I know that you will not forget me if I treat you right," he hinted, meaning that he expected compensation from us either in the form of clothing or of food. We all assented.

The following days passed all too slowly. We believed that we would be called into the camp within ten days, but as the days passed into a week and then into two weeks, we began to have our doubts and became restless. Our work had suddenly become irksome and we lived only in the thoughts of getting home and that as soon as possible. When the sergeant came again to the village with no news and a few more promises, we were disgusted with the outlook for the immediate future. That was Sunday afternoon, the twenty-fourth of November. Paine

and Moss were over from the neighboring village. As we sat around the beer house, we decided to walk into camp the next morning to see exactly how things were and to get some food. We fully intended to return, believing that we would be better off on the farm than waiting in the dirty *Lager* until the prisoners were sent across the line.

Our German sergeant accompanied us the next morning as far as the prison gate, where the five of us filed in past the guard.

My first thought was to get any mail that had possibly collected in my absence, for I had had none since that first letter from home, received in September. To my great delight, some forty letters were awaiting me, together with money sent by friends in Paris.

On looking up Lockwood, I found that he had been made the representative of the American Red Cross at Langensalza. It was he who had been forwarding the food boxes to me so regularly and who had been painting out all written matter on the outside of the boxes in the hope that there would be less chance of their being stolen. In all the time that I had been on the farm, none of my boxes had been tampered with, or stolen. This was surprising especially after what I had heard of the losses of English food parcels. Our American food had come in a sealed car from Berne, had been opened in front of Lockwood and a German officer and had then been moved to the French committee barrack, which was always under guard. Lockwood performed his duties conscien-

tiously and faithfully, treating all American prisoners alike, with the exception of those who were in the hospital, and they required an extra ration.

When I went up to the prisoners' barracks, an English roll call of the old prisoners was in progress. Gilbert came immediately to where I was standing.

"When they call Paine's name, 24th Royal Fusiliers, will you answer for him as he did not come with us, and if he fails to answer this he may miss out on the first convoy." I agreed and we mingled in the crowd. In a few minutes I sang out "Here!" in answer to Paine's name. An Irishman standing near looked me over and then remarked:

"You ain't English; what you trying to get away with, Yank?" My explanation satisfied him.

We were not the only prisoners who had become worried over the delay. The camp was full of men who had left their jobs and returned to camp in the hope of getting an early convoy.

The return to camp was a pleasure, for our old friends were there with their experiences to relate. With the signing of the armistice, practically all the rules and details had been abolished. We from Illeben talked the situation over and decided it was better to remain in camp until repatriation. We had done enough farming. When the German sergeant returned to accompany us past the guard at the gate, we told him, as we left for Illeben, of our decision and he agreed to go out to the village for us that evening.

An American and an Englishman in camp accom-

panied us back to the village to help us carry our packs. Just after leaving the *Lager*, we met a German officer who stopped us and demanded where we were going. Seven prisoners, walking alone in the country, must have aroused his suspicions. We explained that we were returning to our *Kommandos*. He motioned to us to proceed.

Frau Hess gave me a questioning look as I entered the door.

"No more work for me, I am going back to camp to-night," I said, as I began to pick up some of my things that were lying in the hall.

Immediately she went to her room and after a moment's absence, hurriedly returned and handed me seven marks—my pay.

"Go, and go quickly!" she ordered.

I could not help laughing. So that was the manner in which she intended to dismiss me after my two months' service. But I was not to be dismissed so promptly, for we had all planned to have supper that evening in her barroom, and I wished to delay matters for a time so that Gilbert, whose German was better than mine, could come over and explain. The Frau changed her attitude when he went into details, stating that if she would boil the coffee she could have what was left from the pound which we gave her. There were to be nine of us and that included the German sergeant.

Our farewell meal was one that will be long remembered, both by the Frau and ourselves. The coffee, together with our canned goods, consisting of beef,

sardines, cheese, jam, and hard-tack, was a feast indeed. The little German bar rang with our merry laughter and our English drowned the conversation between the sergeant and the Frau. We drank to each other's health in the tasteless German beer, and then to the health of our countries. We regarded ourselves no longer as prisoners, although the Frau probably still looked upon us as *Schweine* that had to be tolerated.

As I was strapping on my pack, the Frau came up to me for a few parting words. She asked me to send her some shoes, coffee, and sardines, and also to write her and send her my picture, all of which I said I would do, believing that it was better to leave her in a good humor. Her presumption was amusing. I wondered if she thought I was so impressed with her household that I would continue her acquaintance.

"My farming days are over, thank God! and now we are going back to Blighty," remarked one of the Englishmen, with a sigh of relief, as we stepped into the street. "Blighty," as these men spoke of England, had been uppermost in their minds for many months, as America had been in mine. To be going back to that which we had dreamed of during the long months, back to our friends and home and country, sent a thrill of excitement through me. Our departure had come so suddenly that I did not realize the full importance of it until we were hiking back to camp that night, sweating under our packs, as we shifted them from shoulder to shoulder.

CHAPTER VII

LANGENSALZA

Our guard saw us past the sentry at the gate and nodded a short good-night. We turned toward the English barrack to find our quarters. It was nearly midnight and the camp was quiet. The lights along the high barbed wire fence marked the outer limits of the camp. Now and then a guard, like a somber shadow with his heavy field coat and helmet blurring his features, passed under a street light. For an instant his bayonet flashed in the light and his clumsy boots resounded on the gravel.

As all the bunks were occupied an American offered to share his narrow space with me. His bunk was so narrow that once settled for the night under his blankets and our overcoats we were forced to lie in one position. I looked back rather longingly to my feather bed at Illeben as the hard boards made my bones ache; but, then, I was happy.

The prisoners refused to do any more work after the signing of the armistice so that there were practically no more details except those necessary for cleaning the camp, and it was not always that such details could be obtained. Only the persistency of

the English sergeant-major, and the sense of duty on the part of a few, kept the camp from becoming unsanitary. Once the condition of the prison was neglected for a few days the chances became great that a plague or disease might break out. Influenza did in fact pass through the *Lager* but its prevalence was small in comparison to the number of men in camp. As it was, a funeral took place nearly every afternoon.

I was fortunate enough to be invited to join a party of Frenchmen and Americans who were messing together. One of the Frenchmen, who had run a restaurant in civilian life, did the cooking while we all took turns in acting as the kitchen police. As a great part of the American food consisted of meat while the French food was largely vegetable, we could, by combining, arrive at a happy medium, and at the same time help the French who were running rather short of supplies. Moreover we were able to buy potatoes and cabbage from the Russians who had as a matter of fact stolen them from the Germans. Monsieur Ponthieux served us delicious meals considering that he did all of his cooking over a little portable tin stove.

It was quite a sight to see three or four hundred prisoners preparing their meals over these improvised stoves. Before the armistice half an hour twice a day, noon and night, was only allowed for the cooking. If a prisoner had not finished in that time the guard had a habit of coming up unexpectedly and with a ferocious kick upsetting the stove and meal. When

I arrived in camp from Illeben, however, the men were cooking at all hours.

Our breakfast consisted of coffee and bread; the noon and evening meals consisted of two or three courses. The Frenchmen had made a small folding table and a few empty boxes served as chairs, so that in a crude way we were doing light housekeeping. The noon hour in the French barracks presented an imitation of a huge restaurant such as is common in Paris. The small tables, seating three or four men, were crowded together, leaving only narrow aisles. The men lingered over their coffee and cigarettes, chatting gayly and apparently unmindful of their circumstances or the inconveniences of prison life.

The French barracks also boasted of two barber shops where two enterprising young soldiers continued their civilian occupations to the great convenience of the other prisoners, charging only half a mark for either a shave or a hair cut.

Two days after arriving in the camp occurred the most appalling and pitiless example of the German treatment of prisoners that I had seen. There is not a Frenchman, Englishman, or American who has heard of the tragic event at the camp of Langensalza, Saxony, without just anger and indignation. Here fifteen prisoners, Allied soldiers—French for the most part—were massacred a few days before they were to be released by their German keepers. The crime was committed November 27, 1918, sixteen days after the signing of the armistice, which, in assuring a suspension of hostilities was to give to the

civilized world the hope that the spilling of blood had ended.

Of all the German prisons, the prison camp at Langensalza was the most celebrated by reason of having been, in 1915, the seat of one of the most violent epidemics of typhus, which exacted an awful toll among the unfortunate Allied soldiers, captives in Germany.

At the beginning of November, 1918, there were in the vicinity of Langensalza about thirty thousand prisoners of the different nations of the Entente, among whom nearly twelve thousand were French. Of the total only about two thousand men were actually interned, being located in wooden barracks; the rest were distributed on the farms, in the factories, and in the mines of the surrounding district, working usually in groups, named *Kommandos*, under the surveillance of a detachment of *Landsturm*. When the news of the armistice spread, the prisoners who worked on the *Kommandos*, fearing lest they be forgotten in the repatriation for which they had so long hoped, returned in haste to camp. Many of them were sent back to their work with the assurance that they would not be forgotten. A certain number nevertheless remained in camp, so that there were about four thousand prisoners there on November 27th.

To accommodate that large number it was necessary to make arrangements for new quarters in barracks designed to hold only half of that number. That was why the French soldier, Tocque, of the 351st Infantry, a prisoner for two years, and secretary

of the bureau of the 5th *Kompagnie* (of prisoners), received orders from the commander of the camp to prepare the old canvas and wooden barracks which up to that time had served as a theater, for the housing of seven hundred prisoners arriving that day from their *Kommandos*.

These barracks, pompously called a theater by the prisoners who had given plays therein as a distraction during the monotonous hours of their captivity, consisted of three long adjoining structures built in the form of tents, roofed with boards and having a floor. When the soldier Tocque went there an hour before noonday to carry out his orders, he found on the inside of the barracks a certain number of prisoners, French, English, Italians, and Russians, occupied in tearing down the scenery of the theater and the small dressing-rooms that had served their purpose for the actors; that scenery and those dressing-rooms had been constructed by the prisoners themselves with planks bought with the receipts from the theater. Being no longer used, some of the prisoners had received permission from the commander of the camp to take this wood, which belonged to them, to use for heating purposes. Winter had come and it is severe in that region. The unfortunates, profiting by the permission given them, had begun to remove their firewood. Some had left already, carrying cross beams and broken laths; and others, under the amused eyes of the German soldiers guarding them, began to tear to pieces the floor and the sides.

Witnesses affirm that the Germans themselves par-

ticipated in the demolition already commenced and took their share of the wood thus torn down. Seeing this, the soldier Tocque intervened, asking his comrades to carry away only the material from the scenery and the dressing-rooms, insisting on the necessity of leaving the rest in the barracks, as it was to be occupied by seven hundred men arriving that day. Unable to make them all hear, Tocque went to the nearest post of the guard and asked that a sentinel be placed at each door of the old theater so as to intercept the prisoners. It was then about one-thirty in the afternoon. Up to that time the life of the camp was in every way normal, without the slightest indication that the inherent cruelty of the Germans was soon to degenerate into a bloody massacre.

Tocque waited ten minutes after having asked for the sentinels. It is likely, on account of the gravity of what followed, that the under officer of the guard telephoned to the commander of the camp and solicited orders. It will now be seen, after having had the testimony of witnesses, what was then resolved upon by the commander, and what turn he decided to give to the incident.

At the post of the guard the German soldiers talked it over among themselves. Two Frenchmen who were present overheard them say: "A patrol is not sufficient; a patrol would do no good there!" To which the chief of the post responded, "Yes, yes, not a patrol, but a battalion, and good shooting!"—"*Und richtig schiessen.*"

It was then that the bugler of the guard, by order of the under officer, chief of the post, blew the alarm twice. A witness related that the bugler appeared to hesitate before blowing as if he realized what was to follow. These facts force the conclusion that from that moment the Germans foresaw and prepared for an armed assault on the camp.

That bugle call, which some of the prisoners did not even hear, could not be distinguished from other numerous calls which were given in the camp at that hour for the assembling of certain details, and thus they did not grasp its full warning. In one part of the camp, near the theater, a game of football was in progress. This was not even interrupted. Everyone continued to pursue his accustomed occupation; some were going to the hospital, others to the tailor shop, and still others of the relief committees were distributing food to their comrades. The rest were wandering around camp inoffensively, or were quiet spectators of the football match.

Ten minutes passed after the sounding of the alarm before the first troop of the Germans—five or six—arrived on the run, led by an under officer, Kraüss, coming from the north along a corduroy road. At the same moment another troop of as many as fifty men, led by a *Feldwebel* with revolver in hand, came running along a brick walk which led from the commander's office to the southeast, and began to deploy on the walk, pushing back the prisoners who obstructed the passage; behind this body of men came

Captain Koch, who commanded a company of *Landsturm* stationed at the camp, very excited.

Without demanding either by word or by bugle that the crowd of prisoners disperse, without ordering the theater to be evacuated, in fact without any warning whatsoever, the *Feldwebel* fired twice with his revolver. Immediately rifle fire broke forth and the crowd was caught by the cross fire of the two German groups.

The firing lasted two minutes! The dead were strewn on the football field and in front of the theater where they had fallen. Great excitement followed among the helpless prisoners present while those in the distant parts of the camp did not know what had happened. One prisoner raised a wounded comrade wishing to take him to the hospital, whereupon a soldier of the *Landsturm* ran his bayonet through the dying man, forcing his comrade to flee. Two witnesses saw that Tocque attempted to interfere but was brutally struck with the butt of a rifle.

As the shooting stopped, some prisoners were aiding their wounded friends when they were charged by the young German recruits, who finally left only a bloody heap on the ground. Those who had remained in the committee barracks adjoining the theater were driven out at the point of the bayonet. A witness heard a German soldier exclaim with a laugh, "I did some good shooting!"

Many prisoners—among them Chief Adjutant Lambert and Sergeants Robert, Rolland, and Bajol—ran into the crowd vainly trying to speak. Finally

Captain Koch authorized the adjutant and a corporal to go to the commander and make an explanation. It was high time! On the ground lay fifteen dead—nine Frenchmen, three Englishmen, two Italians, and a Russian, and thirteen wounded. Bodies of the dead were picked up on the football field, in front of the theater, on the walks, and even in the barracks of the relief committee. To-day they sleep in enemy soil, in Langensalza, where their comrades have raised simple black and white stone monuments over their graves.

Such is the brief statement of the facts.

Who was responsible? The inborn brutal instinct of the German was of course at the bottom of it all. But more to be denounced than the stupid man who did "some good shooting" or he who plunged his bayonet into the wounded, is the officer who coldly sitting in the bureau of the commander of the camp planned the massacre and without a word of explanation being asked and without a warning, gave the command to fire. That officer, recognized by all the prisoners, was condemned by the testimony given by thirty witnesses who were questioned during the different inquests held at Langensalza by the delegates from Spain and Holland who had come from Berlin at the request of the relief committee, and by the officers of the French mission for the repatriation of prisoners—that officer was Captain Koch.

That the massacre was premeditated, there is not a doubt. Witnesses established that, and their evidence left no question. A German soldier standing before

the office of the commander of the camp said to a prisoner, "Go, warn your comrades, those soldiers are going to shoot them!" It was a brutal massacre, commanded by a German officer, executed by German soldiers against unarmed and inoffensive prisoners who for the most part were engaged at play.

It is perhaps unnecessary to add that the German government entirely approved of Captain Koch's conduct in the murderous affair, as he was soon given advancement. Before the killing of the fifteen men at Langensalza he commanded a company of *Landsturm* charged with guarding the prisoners; when I left France he commanded a battalion.

At the time, I was in one of the barracks on the other side of the camp. As the first shot rang out, a breathless silence came over the room which was filled with a crowd of Englishmen. Then the men ducked for cover as the shooting continued. Our own excitement was over in a few minutes, yet no one seemed to know what had happened, and it was not for several days that we were able to gather all of the facts of the case.

We believed that we would be sent to the border, Holland or Switzerland, most any day, yet the days passed with only promises from the Germans and rumors that a train was due in a day or two. But the days came and went and no trains arrived. On the other hand, prisoners were coming in from the *Kommandos* and the camp was more than crowded. Men were sleeping on the barrack floors and the rooms were occupied by twice their accustomed number.

No tenement could have been worse. The men lay so close to one another that it was almost impossible not to step on them at night. Being December the weather had become bitterly cold. Only by closing the doors did we begin to keep warm, and even then we were sleeping with our clothes on and our overcoats were used for extra covering. The air became vile toward morning, although at the same time the warmth of our bodies had taken the chilliness out of the air. We awoke cramped and with a heavy head in the morning. Would the new day bring better news?

An American officer arrived from Berlin during the first week in December. As a member of a commission for the repatriation and transportation of prisoners he visited the camp to inspect our condition, and to do what he could for our release. Whatever the outcome of his trip was I never learned, at least our departure was not immediate.

Before the shooting affair many of us had been in the habit of bribing our way out of camp with a piece of soap or chocolate, and taking strolls around the town of Langensalza. During this period the prisoners wandered at large, frequenting the shops and cafés or merely walking about the streets. Before the armistice we had been required to salute all German officers. Now in passing them we showed no recognition whatsoever to any officers except those who were Allied. After the massacre, however, I remained in the camp lest the affair, being only an expression of the German hatred for the prisoners, might be repeated.

One story which had its final ending in camp during my absence while on the farm is worthy of mention. In fact it would fill a volume in itself could it but be told in full. I can give only the facts briefly:

Eighteen hundred Englishmen were captured during the same German advance in May in which I was taken. These men were put to work behind the German lines, working on ammunition dumps and roads. Their rations consisted only of soup twice a day, and that of a limited quantity, and almost negative quality. Of these eighteen hundred only one hundred and eighty-seven survived to return to the camp at Langensalza six months later. Overwork and starvation rations had killed the rest. Of the number which arrived in camp, seventy-five died the first ten days. The American doctor who was attached to the hospital reported that none of the remaining men would live over two years, so severe and so long had been the strain which they had been forced to undergo at the point of a bayonet. These facts point to a tragedy too awful to comprehend.

During the second week in December the first convoy of English left for Holland. Campbell, Turner, and Gilbert, together with others whom I had known, were included in the fifteen hundred earlier prisoners who left at that time. I knew what that departure meant to them, many of whom had been prisoners for four years. No wonder that they swung their packs with high spirits and pushed eagerly toward the gate—they were going home! And their going was the next best thing to my going,

yet I knew that in all probability I would never see them again. I have never had kinder friends than those Englishmen nor could I know better men than they.

The number of Americans in camp had gradually grown, both from the front and from neighboring camps which had been evacuated, so that our number was raised to forty-five. Our departure seemed imminent.

CHAPTER VIII

CASSEL—REPATRIATION

FINALLY, on December 18th, we left for Cassel, while the few who were in the hospital were sent directly to Rastatt. At the station in Langensalza we had a five-hour wait, not leaving until six in the evening. The ride in the third-class coach was uneventful and about eight the next morning we pulled into the suburban station of Cassel which was used for the prisoners. A mile walk brought us to the camp which was situated on the outskirts of the city. Cassel was the home of Hindenburg and also on the neighboring mountain was the castle of Wilhelmshohe owned by the ex-Kaiser.

According to all reports we were to remain there only over night, going on to Frankfort the next morning. We accepted cheerfully the filthy quarters assigned us. During the first ten minutes in the camp, while looking for a place to sleep, the box containing my food, letters, souvenirs, and in fact everything I possessed, was stolen. The few Americans that were there when we arrived welcomed us with open arms, for their departure depended on our arrival.

The next morning we did not leave, nor the next,

and the days began to drag by as before. The Germans would give us no satisfaction as to the possible date of our leaving. Cassel was a camp similar to Langensalza in construction and equipment, but because of neglect during the few weeks after the armistice, it had become almost as filthy a hole as Laon. As all details had ceased, the lack of sanitation around the barracks had become practically unbearable. The prisoners of the different nationalities were not segregated, so that had the English or French tried to maintain some semblance of cleanliness around their barracks, the filth of the Russians, who occupied the building with us, would have counteracted all that could have been done.

The condition of the prisoners at Cassel had become worse after the signing of the armistice. No food shipments were arriving, and no convoys had been leaving, while the prisoners were returning from their *Kommandos* daily. The same food condition eventually would have existed at Langensalza had we remained there many weeks longer. Cassel resembled a pig pen more than a prison. To step off the duck walks meant to go over one's ankles in mud. The Russians after finishing their soup threw the refuse out the window where it remained in stinking heaps. Had not the camp been situated on a hillside so that the drainage was fair, and had it not been midwinter the place would have been a pest hole reeking with disease. As it was, the hospital was filled to overflowing and with practically no medicine for the sick.

At night it was really dangerous to leave the barracks. The men, because of the shortage of fuel for cooking, had been tearing empty barracks to pieces. As a result the guards shot indiscriminately prisoners whose movements appeared suspicious to them, and that, taken literally, meant anyone walking about after dark. The crack of a rifle could be heard with disquieting frequency during the night. Yet the men who were stationed there took the situation as a matter of course.

The day before Christmas, an English hospital train arrived to remove all the sick and wounded. Two or three Americans who had been reported sick also left on the train.

Christmas morning broke cold and cheerless. I arose and made the cocoa while the others took breakfast in bed as that was the best means of keeping warm. That noon Lockwood acted as cook, and gave us as good a Christmas dinner as our supplies would permit. We had just finished when an American prisoner came over and announced that we would leave at three that afternoon. This news was a wonderful Christmas present!

That evening, as we bumped along in a third-class coach, some sixty Americans in the party, we agreed that this Christmas had brought to us more joy than any we had ever experienced. We had just seated ourselves when one of the Americans walked over to the German guard, a boy of about eighteen, and picked up his rifle which was standing in the corner. Opening the breach block he ejected the cartridges

and threw them out of the window. He then unfastened the bayonet, put it in the guard's scabbard and returned then to his seat. The boy guard smiled submissively and continued eating his supper of sausage and black bread. This guard was indeed a very different type from those who had escorted us into the interior of Germany, or from those who had done the shooting at Langensalza.

After a dull trip the train pulled into the station of Frankfort about two o'clock in the morning. Accompanied by a civilian guard, who met us, we were taken to a lunchroom in the station and served hot coffee, sausage, sandwiches, and beer. This came as a surprise and it was quite in keeping with the peculiar German notion that by a last good impression they could efface from our memories all that had happened during the past months.

From the station our guide led us across the street to a hotel, the Kolnerhof, where we were assigned rooms. For once we had nothing over which to grumble. It was the turn of the German proprietor to be displeased, for he did not seem to welcome the intrusion of the sixty dirty, lousy men that trooped upstairs to occupy the three upper floors. As for ourselves, we were overjoyed at the sight of those real beds and the possibility of a good night's sleep. We tumbled in with all haste.

The next morning about nine, before we were fully dressed, an American and a Swiss major who had come to take charge of us held a brief roll call in the hall, and gave us a few directions. We were to be in

the city for a few days, not more than three, until a section of American ambulances could arrive to motor us to Strassburg where we would cross the lines. We were allowed to spend the intervening time as we wished, only we were to keep in touch with the hotel, so as to be on hand for our departure.

Our breakfast, as well as the other meals we received while there, was served in the main dining room, and was entirely Red Cross food. We presented a strange picture in our ragged clothes as we sat down to meals in that large stately dining room, being served by the Germans in dress suits. A few songs that evening over our coffee brought more clearly to mind the fact that we were no longer prisoners, but soldiers about to return to our own armies. It was too good to be true, but there we were within five miles of the French lines.

Frankfort at that time was part of the neutral zone, occupied neither by the Germans nor the Allies, but policed by a home guard of civilians. During our three days in the city we did as much sight-seeing as possible, taking long walks. Frankfort although quaint in portions reminded me more of an American city than any that I had seen on the continent. But from appearances I judged that business was dull. The shop windows clearly revealed the condition of trade. In place of leather goods the shoe stores exhibited clumsy footwear with wooden soles and paper tops; the meat markets were practically empty; the clothing stores displayed some goods, but the prices were beyond the reach of the average individ-

ual. The stationery stores and bookshops were doing a good business.

During our search for a theater the first evening, we asked a home guard for directions, and inquired whether we would be admitted, and, if so, what would it cost us. We were all practically without money. He spoke English, and was very obsequious.

"Cost you anything? Why no! You are no longer prisoners, but masters of the situation. Go where you wish and make yourselves at home." We did. If we wanted to go to the moving picture show we simply walked in and sat down. Our appearance was our ticket.

Later we dropped into a café. Much to our surprise, the orchestra struck up the *Star-spangled Banner*. That incident illustrates how readily the Germans are able to disguise their feelings, for of course the outward expression of friendliness was a mere pretense. During our stay in Frankfort of three days I noticed no evidence of open hostility toward us on the part of the civilians. While sitting in the café, a German accosted us and asked if we wished to get across the lines which were only a few miles outside of the city. When we questioned him, he replied that he thought we were prisoners, and that he would take us through the lines for a consideration. We declined with thanks. The cafés were crowded at night. The war appeared to have had no effect on that side of German life. But perhaps the reaction after the armistice tended to increase the gayety in the city.

Several Germans with whom we talked expressed the desire that the Americans should occupy Frankfort in preference to the English or the French, and that any occupation was better than none, for it would insure a relief of the food situation. Germany was not suffering much from lack of food in the country, but in the cities the people were indeed feeling the strain of the blockade.

On the morning of December 29th, at ten o'clock, a section of American ambulances rolled down the Kaiserstrauss and drew up before the hotel. A loud ringing cheer greeted them as we caught the first glimpse of the small American flags mounted on the bodies of the cars. In a moment we were on our way, leaving a crowd of curious Germans gaping on the sidewalk. The last lap of our journey had begun.

That afternoon we passed the advance line of the French outposts. When I saw that poilu standing beside the road with his fixed bayonet and his polished helmet I could have thrown my arms around his neck and greeted him in the true French manner. Going by way of Darmstadt and Mannheim, where we remained over night, and then continuing on to Rastatt the next day, where we were delayed for equipment, we crossed the Rhine, and the bridgehead at Strassburg, held by the French Foreign Legion, and, on New Year's Day, 1919, after having been a prisoner for seven months, I set foot once more in France.